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**IBN ḤIBBĀN AL-BUSTĪ'S (d. 354/965) CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENCE OF  
ḤADĪTH TRANSMISSION**

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## ABSTRACT

This research is based upon a collection of generally unutilized ḥadīth literature, and is not only concerned with a study of “authenticity” of the ḥadīth, but is also concerned with the science of ḥadīth transmission as advanced by the master critic, Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965). Although the focus of modern ḥadīth scholarship has placed greater emphasis on transmitter evaluation of the second/eight and the third/ninth centuries, it still the case that a great part of the reliability of ḥadīth transmitter was not simply adopted by ḥadīth critics of the fourth/tenth century, as Ibn Ḥibbān has distinctly demonstrated. By scrutinizing Ibn Ḥibbān’s introduction to his *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā* (“The Divisions and the Categories”) famously known as *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, we are afforded a unique insight into the application of his transmitter evaluation, authentic ḥadīth criterion and the concept of *khābar* and *sunna*. As the title suggests, this was a very clear conception of the degree to which his work is a collection dealing with the body of ḥadīth by the divisions and the categories which are interpreted with legal theory.

Furthermore, there is no consensus on the topic of evaluating persona and it is not germane among Muslim scholars. Thus, we present a synopsis of the history of ḥadīth criticism until the time of Ibn Ḥibbān as well as the techniques that the early critics employed to determine the evaluation of transmitters. Even though a comprehensive analysis of whole of Ibn Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionary of impugned transmitters (namely *Ma’rifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Dhu‘afā’ min al-Muḥaddithīn*) would be exceedingly beneficial, this study only concentrates on the introduction of the book. Our discursive approach has pointed out the state of disagreement of transmitter evaluation that occurred in the fourth/tenth century and the compelling contribution of Ibn Ḥibbān’s works to the subsequent literature on the science of ḥadīth transmission.

The final part of this study is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of the Prophet and the early scholars in the Islamic tradition. The task involves a short analysis of the purposes, history, organization, total of figures, and basic strategies used in Ibn Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionaries. Apart from biographical material of reliable transmitters in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it manifests clearly that Ibn Ḥibbān’s approval of a transmitter is due to the inclusion both in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Mashāḥīr al-‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*. The ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāḥīr* are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet through the arrangement of

*ṭabaqāt*. In this manner, Ibn Ḥibbān could reveal of the genealogy of authority since both sources yield information of reliable transmitters who lived during a period of 300 years after the Prophet's death.

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searching for meaning. “If learning the truth is the scientist’s goal, then he must make himself the enemy of all that he reads.”

*wa mā tawfīqī illā bi’Llāh*

## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Muhammad Fawwaz Bin Muhammad Yusoff

March 2017

## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

The transliteration for Arabic used in thesis follows the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*:

**Table 1: Transliteration Table: Consonants and *Tā' marbūṭa***

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l

ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		هـ	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ع	ʿ
ض	ḍ		ي	y
			ة	-a

Table 2: **Transliteration Table: Vowels, Diphthongs and Definite Article**

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
َ	a		َ، اُ، اِي	an
ُ	u		ُو	un

ِ	i		ِي	in
َا، اِ، اَي	ā		وْ	aw
ُو	ū		َي	ay
ِي	ī		وْ	uww, ū  (in final position)
			ِي	iyy, ī  (in final position)

**ABBREVIATION**

AH	After <i>Hijra</i>
CE	Common Era
d.	Died
Fi.	Figure
n.d.	No date
no.	Number
opp.	Opposite
pl.	Plural
lit.	Literally
sing.	Singular
<i>GAL</i>	<i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i>
<i>GAS</i>	<i>Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums</i>

## **HIJRĪ - GREGORIAN DATES CONVERTER**

The term *hijrī* refers to the lunar calendar that is used by Muslims in calculating dates. The word refers to the emigration of the Prophet from Muḥammad from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. On occasion in this work we have used the *hijrī* date, and on doing so have suffixed the letters AH as an indication thereof. We have also mentioned the same date using Common Era. We have used the following website to convert *hijrī* dates to Common Era: <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm>

## INTRODUCTION

The study of ḥadīth scholarship, even if concentrating on *matn* (text), *isnād* (chain of transmitters), or even extracting the mode of life of the Prophet (*Sunnah*), has faced growing criticism. Many scholars of ḥadīth have no lack of confidence about the authenticity of this prophetic tradition, while others have thoughtfully sceptical. The discussion of the “authenticity” of ḥadīth, Arabic literature furnishes with a chain of transmitters for texts made about the past. *Isnād* seems to have existed casually in some literatures in the Pre-Islamic period, in an ambiguous custom, without attaching any importance to it. The *isnād* structure was also used – to some extent – in transmitting pre-Islamic poetry.<sup>1</sup>

However, it was in the ḥadīth literature that its importance was highlighted until finally it was counted as a part of tradition of transmission. This system works when the transmitter states his source of fact; in turn tracing that narrative all the way back to the Prophet. The Prophet saying, deeds and tacit approval, as well as exalted character and physical appearance were carefully watched by his Companions and were recited by them with the help of each other until they had memorized them. In informing their fellows they would have naturally used sentences like ‘the Prophet looked like’, ‘the Prophet did so and so’ or ‘the Prophet said so and so’. It is also common practice that one of them who acquired the knowledge (ḥadīth) at second hand, while narrating the occasion to another man (third person), might have acknowledged his sources of information and might have given a complete explanation of the event. After the death of the Prophet, this method was widely used for the diffusion of the ḥadīth of the Prophet and it gave birth to the *isnād*.<sup>2</sup>

The ḥadīth is regarded meaningless in the absence of the *isnād*. Indeed, the *isnād* is said to be of vital importance to the religion, as was eloquently stated by Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728): “This knowledge is a religion, so consider from whom you get your religion.”<sup>3</sup> Other proclamations in praise of the *isnād* were attributed to early Muslim scholars such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161/777) who said: “The *isnād* is the believer’s weapon. Without his weapon with him with what will he fight?”<sup>4</sup> ‘Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) who emphasized the importance of the *isnād* once said: “The *isnād* is part of the religion. If it

<sup>1</sup> M. Mustafa A’zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2000), 212. See also John Burton, *An Introduction to the Ḥadīth*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 29.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mustafa A’zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*, 213.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Naṣar Muḥammad al-Faryabī (Riyadh: Dār Tayba, 1426/2005), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ḥākim, *Al-Madkhal ilā Ma’rifat Kitāb al-Iklīl*, ed. Aḥmad b. Fāris, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003), 58.



were not for the *isnād* anyone would say whatever he wishes to say.”<sup>5</sup> In the meantime, *isnād* gave rise to a vast and genuine biographical information literatures, a unique Islamic achievement.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, during the second/eight and third/ninth centuries, ḥadīth scholars like al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204/751), Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) made every effort to establish the core doctrine in the light of the Prophet’s teaching. They also assembled collections that were limited to reports that possessed explicit *isnād* going back to the Prophet. As asserted by Brown, these *sunan*<sup>7</sup> and *ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>8</sup> collections “would have proven a very effective first line of defense against material entering the Islamic tradition from outside sources; Ibn Ḥanbal and other early transmission-based scholars paid no heed to material lacking an *isnād*.”<sup>9</sup>

Basically, these collections consisted of thousands ḥadīths and every ḥadīth consists of two parts: the *matn* (text) and the *isnād* (the chain of transmitters). In order to understand the exact significance of the *matn*, and to test its soundness, it is necessary to know the meaning of the various expressions it contains, especially those which appear to be rare or obsolete, and also to learn its relation to the *matn* of other traditions, some of which may be either corroborated or contradicted by it.<sup>10</sup> For another part, ḥadīth scholars have developed various important branches of learning which relate to the criticism of the *isnād*. It is necessary to know that the *isnād* contained transmitters, and so scholars developed criticism to assess the life, career and character of all individuals in the chain, what weight of reliance may be placed on them and also they created ways to examine contiguous transmission.<sup>11</sup> These sources derived from various writings dealing with chronology (*tārīkh*), biography (*sīra*) and evaluation of transmitters.

Thus, one of the most important and wealthiest branches of *isnād* study is that known as *‘ilm al-rijāl al-ḥadīth*, i.e. the biography of the transmitters of ḥadīth. While related to this

<sup>5</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Fazlur Rahman, “Sunnah and Ḥadīth,” *Islamic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June 1962), 1-36.

<sup>7</sup> A collection of ḥadīth that organized topically, and thus easily used as a legal reference, but also focused on Prophetic reports with full *isnāds*.

<sup>8</sup> A collection of ḥadīth that devoted only to ḥadīths whose *isnāds* they felt met the requirements of authenticity.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 51.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature: It’s Origin, Development & Special Features*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2012), 91.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 80.

research, *‘ilm al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*, lit. ‘the discipline of impugning and approving’ or the evaluation of the ḥadīth transmitter is the sub-discipline of the field of biography which evaluates a general critical appraisal of the reliability of ḥadīth transmitters. This study has been developed among ḥadīth scholars from an early period and has been applied to *isnād* of ḥadīth in order to examine their validity and the reliability of transmitters.

The chronological, biographical and transmitter evaluation literature is extremely rich and someone has only to look at *Tārīkh Baghdād*, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, or *Lisān al-Mīzān* to gain some impression of the extent of materials available. Some of these collections deal only with the transmitters’ names, teknonym, nickname (*asmā’*, *kunyā*, *naṣab*), while some of them contain biographical details of all narrators who may live in or visited a particular town, for example Damascus or Baghdad. In particular, early works on the evaluation of transmitter include the *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* of Ibn Sa’d (d.230/845), the *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl* of al-Jūzajānī (d. 259/873), and the massive *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* of al-Bukhārī. The evaluation of the discipline of impugning and approving transmitters usually appeared in conversation sessions among critics, or with their students but its decision was eventually systematically specified by master critics in encyclopaedias of evaluation of transmitters. Basically, they compare the aḥādīth of different students of a transmitter, or the statements of a transmitter at different times, or oral recitation and written documents and many others.

These works continued to fourth/tenth century and we can see that many scholars of this century reassessed and reviewed the evaluation made by earlier scholars. Alongside both Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāruqṭnī (d. 385/995), Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) - a scholar from Bost -<sup>12</sup> compiled at least two different books on evaluation of transmitters. As mentioned by al-Sam’ānī (d. 562/1166), Ibn Ḥibbān undertook extensive journeys to study and collect all the data related to Islamic tradition containing the evaluation of transmitter from Tashkent to Alexandria.<sup>13</sup>

### Objectives of the Study

Accordingly, in the light of the above discussion, it is the aim of this study to analyse and expound on the specific aspects of Ibn Ḥibbān, regarded as one of the master critics to have contributed to the science of ḥadīth transmission in the fourth century of *hijra*/tenth century.

<sup>12</sup> Lashkar Gah in Afghanistan nowadays.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Sam’ānī, *Al-Ansāb*, (Hyderabad: Dā’ira al-Ma’arif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1977), 2/225.

It is an attempt to provide a comprehensive work on Ibn Ḥibbān's methodology in authentication of ḥadīth and evaluating a transmitter. This study will rely mainly on his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* which contains a wide range of transmitter background. These books are of primary concern for scholars in this field on the question of how to accept or reject ḥadīth by looking at the capability of the transmitter.

Apart from focusing on his method in approaching transmitters, a selection of his terminology as presented in his writings is also comparatively analysed within the context of ḥadīth critics at that time. Simultaneously, the origin, authorship and significance of the base work i.e. *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* as an alleged work by Ibn Ḥibbān is also discussed in detail. Ultimately, this leads to a more detailed account on the place and influence of these works on shaping the comprehensive literature of ḥadīth scholarship and its discourse, especially in the fourth/tenth century, and also their impacts in the years to come.<sup>14</sup>

### Significance of the Study

Controversies surrounding the origin of Ibn Ḥibbān's work on the evaluation of transmitter have been discussed superficially by academics, despite its popularity among Islamic scholarship and its important role in the development of ḥadīth studies and its discourse, particularly in the fourth/tenth century. The first published critical edition of *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* made by Muḥammad Abd al-Mu'īd in 1973 and there are three critical editions of *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* edited by scholars from India, Syria and Iraq. Concerning Ibn Ḥibbān's other works on the biography of scholars; his *Mashāḥīr al-'Ulamā' al-Amsār* has been included in one of *The Bibliotheca Islamica* series books, a joint project of the Orient-Institut Beirut and German Oriental Society for the critical edition of Arabic texts.<sup>15</sup> This book was meant to provide an abridgement of famous and reliable ḥadīth transmitters from six regions (Ḥijāz, 'Irāq, Shām, Egypt, Yemen and Khurasān) between the second/eight and fourth/tenth centuries.

<sup>14</sup> Among the first to compose a work on *'ilm al-ḥadīth* (the science of ḥadīth transmission) i.e. the broad designation which includes all of the various discipline making up the study of hadith is al-Ḥākim al-Nīsabūrī who is Ibn Ḥibbān's student.

<sup>15</sup> Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Mashāḥīr al-'Ulamā' al-Amsār*, (Die Berühmten Traditionarier Der Islamischen Länder), BI 22 edited by Manfred Fleischhammer. Cairo: Matba'a Lajna al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr.

In this regard, it is also useful to note that despite the availability of a number of studies on Ibn Ḥibbān undertaken by present day researchers and historians, scholars have rarely attempted to combine his views and contribution to the field of impugning and approving ḥadīth transmitters. Thus we can say also that academic works relating to the ḥadīth methodology of Ibn Ḥibbān is a neglected area of Islamic studies. Existing studies and works concerning Ibn Ḥibbān in the religious sphere of Islamic scholarship are predominantly confined to his compilation *Ṣaḥīḥ* book. In fact, as far as we know, there is hardly found a comprehensive work discussing the issue of Ibn Ḥibbān ḥadīth transmitter evaluation which focuses and combines the *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*.

Therefore, in the light of intellectual history of Ibn Ḥibbān, the present study proposes that it was actually in the fourth/tenth century that there was a significant end-point in transmitter criticism, and one of its discourses took place through *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān. The reason for restricting this study to the work on the ḥadīth criticism is the argument against Ibn Ḥibbān in this field. Ibn Ḥibbān's approach was somewhat different from his contemporaries as he sought to provide for each transmitter a short biography extending between one and three lines in length. The peculiar thing about his work was that he lumped together narrators belonging to different levels of their equity (*ʿadālah*) and precision (*ḍabt*), making them all equal with regard to trustworthiness, not like other masters in this field. We also can find same individual of transmitters in the impugning book and the approving book simultaneously. In addition, he made evaluations of some transmitters whom he himself did not know except through their narrations.

Despite the fact that Ibn Ḥibbān's most famous work called *Ṣaḥīḥ* usually considered the last work in the canonical ḥadīth books,<sup>16</sup> ḥadīths collection still continued as well as the discussion on the evaluation of transmitter. Many modern studies on the evaluation of transmitter also have proven that it is a sophisticated discipline and we must thus cast this study more upon historical perceptions than on historical reality.<sup>17</sup> Establishing the

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 121, no. 1 (Jan. – Mar., 2001); Iftikhar Zaman, "The Science of *Rijāl* as a Method in the Study of Ḥadīths" in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1994): 1-34; Jonathan Brown, "Criticism of the Proto-Hadith Canon, al-Dāraquṭnī's adjustments of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15:1 (2004), 1-37.

background, context and the history of Ibn Ḥibbān's journey is certainly essential for appreciating the formation of Ibn Ḥibbān's works on the evaluation of transmitter.

### Scope of Discussion

Although a comprehensive study of all of Ibn Ḥibbān's books on transmitter evaluation or *rijāl* criticism would be very valuable, the scope of this study circulates primarily around Ibn Ḥibbān's methodology of the transmitter and its discourse based on his *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*. The introduction of Ibn Ḥibbān in both is vital important as the basis for discussion. The same is true for in his gigantic *Ṣaḥīḥ*, his *tarjama al-bāb* (title chapter) in the introduction represents his standpoint in ḥadīth scholarship and is aimed to provide a shield for ḥadīth collectors against their critics.

It is appropriate to note that the scope of the science of ḥadīth transmission as employed here is mostly restricted to ḥadīth scholars between second/eight and eight/fourteenth centuries and particularly Ibn Ḥibbān's methods of selection and terminology which are reflected through an analytical study of conceptions related to ḥadīth criticism, evaluation of transmitter and relevant aspects of its technical disciplines. Ibn Ḥibbān's student al-Ḥākim al-Nīsabūrī, who composed the *Ma'rifāt 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* and other scholars' books on the technical discipline of ḥadīth collection and criticism, such as al-Rāmahurmuzī's *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāṣil*, Ibn Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddimah*, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Kifāya*, al-Suyūṭī's *Tadrīb*, Ibn Ḥajar's *Nuzhat* and *Nukhbat*, provide the notion in which this science was developed.

As our examination reaches the view of scholars on Ibn Ḥibbān scholarship who are not primarily concerned with ḥadīth, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā' al-Shāfi'īyya* and *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-Kubrā* of al-Subkī provide the data concerned with members of Shāfi'īte jurisprudence including Ibn Ḥibbān. This will allow us to see most of the ḥadīth scholars are affiliated with Shāfi'īte jurisprudence. It is also of particular importance to note here that due to the sacred position of ḥadīth among Sunni scholars as authoritative religious material, only a very general discussion regarding its authenticity will be highlighted in this research. Following this, in accordance with the objectives, significance and scope this research is divided into five chapters as follows:

1. Chapter One undertakes a comparative analysis of ḥadīth scholars' methodologies around third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries as presented in their works, particularly

the six collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah. Apart from the scholarly trend and prevalent religious notion at that time. It will highlight this generation's contribution and role to the field of ḥadīth scholarship as well as the influence upon the next generation including Ibn Ḥibbān. It also aims to identify and analyse biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān and his predecessors. This work mostly involves concentrating on scholarly collections of books and of the seminal research articles produced by contemporary academic scholarship on the subject of the historiography and ḥadīth literature of the five early centuries of *hijra*.

2. Chapter Two examines the life of Ibn Ḥibbān, the situation of his home town, the social and political situation around the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries which is carried out through an analytical and textual study of some biographical literature, such as the *Tārīkh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, the *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā'* and *Tadhkirāt al-Huffāẓ* of Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī. It also moves the discussion from Ibn Ḥibbān's works to other scholar's observations on Ibn Ḥibbān and his works. In relation to other Muslim scholar's acknowledgement of him, it is observed that scholars from Shāfi'ite jurisprudence included him as one of their scholars. Concurrently, Ibn Ḥibbān long travels for knowledge are arguably the most ordinary and typical feature among ḥadīth scholars after leaving their hometown. Thus, we must cast various nets to trace Ibn Ḥibbān's journey in order to reconstruct his biography.
3. Chapter Three discusses the scholarship of Ibn Ḥibbān in ḥadīth. His *Ṣaḥīḥ* will be discussed briefly and why it did not become one of the famous collections, despite the efforts of scholars like Ibn Taymiyya in his *Majmū' Fatāwā*, Ibn Kathīr in *al-Bā'ith al-Hathīth* and Zayn al-Dīn al-'Iraqī in *Taqyīd wa al-'Idhāh* who tried to raise up this work as a remarkable source for authentic ḥadīth.
4. Chapter Four focus on the evaluation of transmitter works of Ibn Ḥibbān. Thus, apart from the question of manuscripts and editions of *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*, Ibn Ḥibbān purposes, structure, and method are also presented in the abstract summary of introduction to his books. This chapter is the central point of research as it provides a closer look on Ibn Ḥibbān as the master critic in the field of impugning and approving transmitters.

5. The final chapter is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of Prophet and early scholars in Islamic tradition. The task involves analysing both theoretical and practical aspects of the establishing scholars by Ibn Ḥibbān which is due to the inclusion both in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Mashāhīr al-‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*. Both sources yield the datum of reliable transmitters who lived in three century-long periods using infrequently gradual terminologies and they certainly give us opportunity to investigate and compare his approach.

In addition to the book of the medieval scholars under discussion, numerous modern works by scholars in the related field in Arabic and English especially Goldziher, Schacht, Abbott, Rahman, Rosenthal, al-Albānī, al-Zahrānī, Juynboll, Nasr, Sezgin, al-‘Umarī, A‘zami, Motzki, al-‘Awnī, Melchert, Lucas, Brown and many others are undoubtedly crucial and incalculable for the accomplishment of this study. However, more importantly, this study perhaps can be measured by means of tracing and analysing the contribution of one of the scholars in Islamic Civilization. Ultimately, this research also aims to present Ibn Ḥibbān as a multi-disciplinary scholar and lay down a basis for the study of him and his contemporaries in further research.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES IN THE TIME OF IBN ḤIBBĀN

The aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān and his predecessors. This work mostly involves concentrating on authoritative collections of books and of the seminal research articles produced by contemporary academic scholarship on the subject of the ḥadīth literature of the five early centuries of *hijra*. Since it is a very large topic, many things have to be omitted and what is selected is considered as canonical of the Muslim tradition. It seeks to elucidate the origin and motives, and to list biographical dictionaries written by scholars who died about Ibn Ḥibbān era, based on research in the *‘ilm al-ḥadīth* (the science of ḥadīth transmission) books. In addition, this work will discuss an integral part of the subtopic in the science of ḥadīth transmission, in particular, that of the early ḥadīth scholars. This chapter, then, contributes to an understanding of which material was in circulation, and helps to discover the reason why a group of master ḥadīth critics were chosen and deemed authoritative in a particular time and place.

#### 1.1 Ḥadīth Collections until the Time of Ibn Ḥibbān

In the last two decades, the collection of ḥadīth and the creation of the ḥadīth genre in the early Islamic period (roughly the first three centuries of Islam) is the best-studied area of ḥadīth literature.<sup>18</sup> The questions about the authenticity, originality, authorship, provenance and the correctness of ḥadīth have appeared, and they have become of central importance to the study of Islam.<sup>19</sup> One can look at Gustav Weil,<sup>20</sup> Alois Sprenger,<sup>21</sup> William Muir,<sup>22</sup> Ignaz

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth: Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 261.

<sup>19</sup> Kamaruddin Amin, “Muslim Western Scholarship of Ḥadīth and Western Scholar Reaction: A Study on Fuat Sezgin’s Approach to Ḥadīth Scholarship”, *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008), 258.

<sup>20</sup> Gustav Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, vol. 2, (Mannheim, 1846-62), 291.

<sup>21</sup> Alois Sprenger, “On the Origin and Progress of Writing Down Historical Facts among the Musulmans”, *Journal and Proceeding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 25, (1856), 303-29, 375-81; “Die Sunna” in Alois Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, (Berlin, 1861-1865), lxxvii-civ.

<sup>22</sup> William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet and the History of Islam to the Era of Hegira*, 4. Vols. (London: 1861; reprint. Osnabruck, 1988).



Goldziher,<sup>23</sup> Leone Caetani,<sup>24</sup> Henri Lammens,<sup>25</sup> Joseph Schacht,<sup>26</sup> Joseph Van Ess,<sup>27</sup> John Wansbrough,<sup>28</sup> Gautier H. A. Juynboll,<sup>29</sup> Patricia Crone,<sup>30</sup> Michael Cook,<sup>31</sup> and Uri Rubin<sup>32</sup> who debated ḥadīth as authentic materials for the historical reconstruction of the time of the Prophet. However, their approach to ḥadīth collections shall be dealt with exclusively since they represent different schools of thought on the historical reliability of the ḥadīth corpus.<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Brown divides four stages of Western study of early Islam that are either chronologically or thematically distinct.<sup>34</sup>

In the opinion of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a number of Western scholars – foremost among them Goldziher followed by Wensinck, Guillaume, Schacht, and others – have tried to apply the ‘historical critical methods’ developed in the nineteenth century to the collection of ḥadīth.<sup>35</sup> Their work was based on the usually unstated premises that what is not found in written records is a later addition or fabrication. Therefore, they came to consider most of the canonically accepted ḥadīth of the Islamic community based upon its religious heritage and hence not authentic sayings, deeds or tacit approval of the Prophet.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1889-1890), translated and edited by S. M. Stern and G. R. Barber as *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1971).

<sup>24</sup> Leone Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. 1, (Milan, 1905), 28-58, 121, 43, 192-215.

<sup>25</sup> Henri Lammens, “Qoran et tradition. Comment fut compose la vie de Mahomet”, in *Reserches de Science Religieuse*, 1 (1910), 27-51, quoted by Harald Motzki, *The Biography of Muḥammad. The Issue of the Sources*, (Brill, 2000), xii.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muḥammad Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: 1950), “A Revaluation of Islamic Tradition”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (1949), 143-154.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Van Ess, *Zwischen Hadīth und Theologie. Studien zum Entstehen pr destinarianischer berlieferung*, (Berlin/New York, 1975).

<sup>28</sup> John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu, Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, (Oxford, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance, and Authorship of Early Hadīth*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadīth*, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1996), “(Re)Appraisal of Some Ḥadīth Technical Terms”, *Islamic Law and Society* 8, no. 3 (2001), 303-349.

<sup>30</sup> Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, (Cambridge, 1977). Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), “Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions” in *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992), 23-47.

<sup>32</sup> Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by Early Muslims*, (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995).

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Hadīth: Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide*, 289.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Hadīth Muḥammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 204. See also an introduction by Fred M. Donner in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, ed. and trans. by Lawrence I. Conrad, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality Foundations*, (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 105.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

In addition, the general belief in the late recording of ḥadīth and the oral transmitted for more than one hundred years was due to the information provided by the ḥadīth scholars themselves.<sup>37</sup> Along with other information, Goldziher and Schacht conclude that the majority of ḥadīth are later inventions of the second/eight and third/ninth centuries that were back-projected to the Prophet and his Companions.<sup>38</sup> Recent works by Cook, Schoeler and others have looked closely at the possible reasons for the opposition to writing down the ḥadīth. Examining reports mainly from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadī's *Taqyīd al-ʿIlm* and other sources, Cook scrutinizes the *isnād* and establishes that the opposition to writing down ḥadīth was prevalent in all major centers of early Islamic scholarship.<sup>39</sup> Correspondingly, Schoeler concludes, "that opposition against codifying ḥadīth in Makkah and Sana'a, scholarly centers far away from Damascus, was much less strong than Iraq and Madinah."<sup>40</sup>

Some works such as Nabia Abbott,<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi,<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Hamidullah,<sup>43</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī,<sup>44</sup> Muḥammad 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb,<sup>45</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Muṭ'īnī,<sup>46</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī,<sup>47</sup> Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī,<sup>48</sup> Muḥammad Maṭar al-Zahrānī,<sup>49</sup> Fred Donner,<sup>50</sup> David Powers,<sup>51</sup> Fuat Sezgin,<sup>52</sup> Muhammad Mustafa A'zami,<sup>53</sup> Harald Motzki,<sup>54</sup> Halit Ozken,<sup>55</sup> and others have defended ḥadīth corpus against these critiques. According to Fuat Sezgin, the ḥadīth collections that were composed in the

<sup>37</sup> Mustafa A'zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Kämpfe um die Stellung des Ḥadīth im Islam*, 86-98; See also Joseph Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, 34; *The Origin of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*, 57.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Cook, "The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam," *Arabica* LXIV (1997), 437-350.

<sup>40</sup> Gregor Schoeler, "Mundliche Thora Und Ḥadīth: Überlieferung, Schreibverbot, Redaktion," *Der Islam*, no. 66 (1989), 213-251.

<sup>41</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>42</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Muḥammad Hamidullah, *An Introduction to the Conservation of Ḥadīth in the Light of the Ṣaḥīfa of Hammam ibn Munabbih*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunna wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, (al-Maktab al-Islāmī & Dār al-Warrāq, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Muḥammad 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb, *al-Sunna Qabl al-Tadwīn*, (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1988).

<sup>46</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Muṭ'īnī, *al-Shubuhāt al-Thalāthūn*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, ed. and trans. by Lawrence I. Conrad, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>48</sup> Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (Madinah: Maktaba al-'Ulūm wa al-Hikam, n.d.).

<sup>49</sup> Muḥammad Maṭar al-Zahrānī, *Tadwīn al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya*, (Riyadh: Maktaba Dār al-Minhāj, 1426H).

<sup>50</sup> Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1998).

<sup>51</sup> David Powers, "On Bequest in Early Islam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 48 no.3 (1989), 185-200.

<sup>52</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, I, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 53 – 233.

<sup>53</sup> Mustafa A'zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*.

<sup>54</sup> Harald Motzki, "The Muṣannaf of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī as a Source of Authentic Aḥadīth of the First Century A.H." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50, no. 1 (1991), 1-21.

<sup>55</sup> Halit Ozken, "The Common Link and Its Realtion to the Madar", *Islamic Law and Society* 11 no. 1 (2004), 42-77.

second or third century of Islam are the result of a reliable process of transmission. Hence, he famously argued that the Companions had already practised ḥadīth written activity since the time of the Prophet.<sup>56</sup> The development of early ḥadīth literature took place in at least three phases; the writing down, collating the scattered records of ḥadīth, and the arrangements of ḥadīths by content in subdivided chapter from 125/742 onwards.<sup>57</sup> He asserts that literary activity in 125/742 was already mature after ḥadīth transmission took place through eight methods from the very early days of Islam; *Samāʿ*, *Qirāʿa*, *Ijāza*, *Munāwala*, *Kitāba* or *Mukātaba*, *Iʿlam al-Rāwī*, *Waṣiyya* and *Wijāda*. Only the first two methods (*samāʿ* and *qirāʿa*) involved committing to memory, whereas the others, and often in practice even *samāʿ* and *qirāʿa*, involved written materials.<sup>58</sup> He further maintains that he had discovered a number of early source texts on which the late compilations were based and proposed a method for the reconstruction of these sources.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile Mustafa Aʿzami includes lengthy Arabic appendices of examples of such early ḥadīth writings and argues that the theory of the recording ḥadīth in the second/ninth century was the result of many misconceptions or misinterpretation of the words such as *tadwīn*, *taṣnīf*, and *kitāba*.<sup>60</sup> He concludes that the Companions kept written records of ḥadīths, and most of the aḥādīths were transmitted in written form until the moment when they were included in the canonical collections. Hence Aʿzami classifies the literary activities into four categories;

- 1) The Companions' writings.
- 2) The writings and works of the Successors who lived mostly in the first century of *hijra*.

<sup>56</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, I, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 53 – 233. See also Kamaruddin Amin, "Muslim Western Scholarship of Ḥadīth and Western Scholar Reaction: A Study on Fuat Sezgin's Approach to Ḥadīth Scholarship", 258.

<sup>57</sup> 1. *Kitāba al-ḥadīth* (the writing down of the ḥadīth) in the time of the Companions and early Successors in the so-called *ṣaḥīfa*.

2. *Tadwīn al-ḥadīth* (collating the scattered records of ḥadīth) in the last quarter of the first, and in the first quarter of the second century.

3. *Taṣnīf al-ḥadīth* (the arrangement of ḥadīths by content in subdivide chapter from 125/ onwards. Towards the end of the second century, ḥadīth were arranged according to the names of Companions, in books called *al-musnad*. See Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, 58-62. See also Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, trans. Uwe Vagelpohl, (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 28.

<sup>60</sup> See also Mustafa Aʿzami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 19.

- 3) The scholars whose literary careers cover the later part of the first century as well as considerable period of the second century.<sup>61</sup>
- 4) The scholars who were born between 70/689 and 110/728.<sup>62</sup>

Muhammad Abdul Rauf classifies this era of the first and early second centuries as the age of *ṣaḥīfa* (plu. *ṣuḥuf*).<sup>63</sup> However the original *ṣuḥuf* of this age have been lost although a few secondary copies survived. Thirteen from fourteen papyri of Nabia Abbott's *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions* is concerned with the written transmission of ḥadīth based on a plethora of evidence such as Umayyad papyri fragments.<sup>64</sup> These early papyri contain almost nothing in the way of ḥadīth content that is not to be found in the ḥadīth collections of the third century. That is to say, the *matns* are not new, though the *isnāds* are not usually those of the ḥadīth as it was later set down.<sup>65</sup> Muhammad Hamidullah has published the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammam b. Munabbih supposedly, the oldest preserved ḥadīth work and is believed to have been written around the mid-first/seventh century.<sup>66</sup> He discovers some very early collections of ḥadīth preserved in the libraries of Berlin, Beirut and Damascus and presents ḥadīth collections which the famous Prophet's Companion, Abū Hurayra (d. 58/677) had prepared for his pupil Hammam b. Munabbih (d. 101/719) with English translation. It is significant that Hammam introduces his text with the words: "Abū Hurayra told us in the course of what he related from the

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<sup>61</sup> In this class, A'zami had listed all the scholars who were born up to or about 65/684, maintaining that the 35-year time and over before the end of the century was sufficient for them to begin their literary career in the later part of the first century.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>63</sup> Originally means 'sheet', at times it was employed for a 'booklet'. See Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, *Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth in Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. F. L. Beeston, T. M. Johnstone, R. B. Serjeant and G. R. Smith, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 272.

<sup>64</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>65</sup> James Robson, Reviewed Work: *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions* by Nabia Abbott in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 27, no. 2 (1968), 143-144; John Wansbrough, Reviewed Work: *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions* by Nabia Abbott in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31, no. 3 (1968), 613-616; John Alden Williams, Reviewed Work: *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions* by Nabia Abbott in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93, no. 1 (1973), 102-103.

<sup>66</sup> Muḥammad Hamidullah, *An Introduction to the Conservation of Ḥadīth in the Light of the Ṣaḥīfa of Hammam ibn Munabbih*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2003), 53.

Prophet,”<sup>67</sup> thus giving the source of his information in the manner that became known as *sanad* or *isnād*.<sup>68</sup>

According to Jamila Shaukat, the collections of these compilers are termed in the sources variously.<sup>69</sup> The most cursory look at the titles of these ḥadīth anthologies indicates the method applied by a particular compiler in his collection. A brief discussion of different types of ḥadīth collections which evolved in the first three centuries as follows, *ṣaḥīfa*, *risāla* or *kitāb*,<sup>70</sup> *juz*,<sup>71</sup> *arbaʿūn*,<sup>72</sup> *muʿjam*,<sup>73</sup> *amālī*,<sup>74</sup> *aṭrāf*,<sup>75</sup> *jamiʿ*,<sup>76</sup> *sunan*, *muṣannaḥ*, and *musnad*. She added it is quite difficult to say exactly which of these genres came first. These collections were primarily anthologies of ḥadīth rather than scholarly treatises. *Muʿjam* and *arbaʿūn* can be referred back to end of the first century *hijra*, and *aṭrāf* as well can be traced back towards the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century of *hijra*. Whereas *amālī* in the second half of the second century.

Following Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Jonathan Brown adds some classification and discusses in detail the emergence of *muṣannaḥ* collections, the *musnad* era, and the *ṣaḥīḥ* and *sunan* movement as a ḥadīth collections genre in the first three centuries of *hijra*.<sup>77</sup> During mid-second/eight century, the first organized works of Islamic scholarship, called *muṣannaḥs* or ‘books organized topically’ were arranged into chapters dealing with different legal or ritual questions.<sup>78</sup> The best-known and earliest surviving of this type is *al-Muwattāʾ* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) which Wael Hallaq has analyzed to find the date of its composition.<sup>79</sup> Yasin Dutton treats *al-Muwattāʾ* in extensive, which he focuses on an analysis of Mālik’s

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. For a more detailed discussion of Abū Hurayra as a ḥadīth transmitter, see Usman Ghani, *Abū Hurayraʾ a Narrator of Ḥadīth Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Ḥadīth with special reference to Classical Islam modes of criticism*, (PhD Dissertation University of Exeter, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, *Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth*, 272.

<sup>69</sup> Jamila Shaukat, “Classification of Ḥadīth Literature”, *Islamic Studies* 24, no. 3 (1985), 357-375.

<sup>70</sup> A *risāla*, also called a *kitāb*, being a collection of aḥādīth concerned with one particular topic.

<sup>71</sup> Individual volume of a book.

<sup>72</sup> A collection of forty aḥādīth usually relating to a variety subjects which may have appeared to be of special interest to the compilers.

<sup>73</sup> A work dealing with various subjects and arranged after the names either of *shuyūkh*, cities or clans in alphabetically or chronologically.

<sup>74</sup> A collection made by a student from the dictation of the *shaykh*.

<sup>75</sup> A collection that contained only a part of ḥadīth.

<sup>76</sup> A subdivision of *muṣannaḥ*.

<sup>77</sup> Perhaps the first use of the term “ḥadīth movement” appeared in Fazlur Rahman, “Sunnah and Ḥadīth”, *Islamic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June 1962), 1-36.

<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth Muḥammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 25.

<sup>79</sup> Wael Hallaq, “On Dating Mālik’s *Muwattāʾ*”, *UCLA Journal of Islamic Studies and near Eastern Law* 1, (Fall 2001-Winter 2002), 47-65. See also Behnam Sadeghi, “The Authenticity of Two 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Century Hanafi legal Texts: The *Kitāb al-Āthar* and *al-Muwattāʾ* of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybān”, *Islamic Law and Society* 17, (2010), 291-319; Muḥammad Yusuf Guraya, “Historical Background of the Compilation of the *Muwattāʾ* of Mālik b. Anas”, *Islamic Studies* 7, no. 4 (1968), 379-392.

methods to derive judgements or legal rulings.<sup>80</sup> Yasin does strongly argue that the last word regularly goes not to ḥadīth but to practice of Madina. Another famous *muṣannaf* written by Mālik's student, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826) is made up eleven printed volumes.<sup>81</sup> Harald Motzki focusses on this *Muṣannaf* where he looks at both the contents of the *isnād* and the *matn* to determine the plausibility of fabrication.<sup>82</sup> However, Brown argues both of these works should be considered as early works of Islamic law when he indicates

If ḥadīth collections are characterized by a predominant focus on reports from the Prophet that include *isnāds* as a means for critics to verify their authenticity, then books like *Muwaṭṭā'* and *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq are not technically ḥadīth collections. Both Mālik and 'Abd al-Razzāq cite rulings of Companions and Successors more frequently than they cite Prophetic ḥadīths. But even when quoting the Prophet directly, the obsession with complete, unbroken chains of transmission that would characterize the classical period of ḥadīth collection is absent.

The emergence of the *musnad* in the late second/eight century is due to a focus on ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet himself, arranged according to the *isnād*.<sup>83</sup> At least forty four *musnads* identified within the third/ninth century.<sup>84</sup> Among the well-known *musnads* include those of Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204/818),<sup>85</sup> of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr al-Humaydī (d. 219/834),<sup>86</sup> of Musaddad b. Musarhad (d. 228/843), the most famous is that of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855),<sup>87</sup> of al-Hārith b. Abī Usāma (d. 282/896),<sup>88</sup> of Abī Bakr al-

<sup>80</sup> Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law: The Quran, the Muwaṭṭā' and Madinan 'Amal*, Culture and Civilization in the Middle East (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999).

<sup>81</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammam al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī. 11 vols. (Simlak, 1391/1972).

<sup>82</sup> Harald Motzki, "The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī as a Source of Authentic Aḥādīth of the First Century A.H." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50, no. 1 (1991), 1-21.

<sup>83</sup> Brown is of opinion that, "Firstly, limiting ḥadīth collections to material that had an *isnād* was a solid first line defense against ḥadīth forgery. Second, the single most important factor in judging the reliability of transmitter was determining if he or she was corroborated in the material he or she reported. In order to know if the transmitter is corroborated in his transmission, critics compared the ḥadīth he reported to those of others who studied with his teachers." See Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth Muḥammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, *Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth*, 273.

<sup>85</sup> Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. al-Jarūd, *Musnad Abi Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī*, ed. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Markaz al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyya wa al-Islāmiyya, Dār Hijra, 1999). However, this *musnad* was not compiled in its present form by al-Ṭayālīsī himself, but by a ḥadīth scholar working in Khurasan at a later date. See Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 44.

<sup>86</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr al-Humaydī, *Musnad al-Humaydī*, ed. Ḥasan Sālim al-Darrānī, (Damascus: Dār al-Saqā, 1996).

<sup>87</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ut and 'Ādil Murshid, 50 vols. (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1995).

<sup>88</sup> 'Alī b. Sulaymān b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī, *Bughyat al-Bāḥith 'an Zawā'id Musnad al-Hārith*, ed. Ḥusayn Aḥmad Sāliḥ, 2 vols. (Madīna: Markaz Khidma al-Sunna wa al-Sira al-Nabawiyya, 1992).

Bazzār (d. 292/904-5),<sup>89</sup> and of Abī Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī (d. 307/).<sup>90</sup> Christopher Melchert published an article on Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s famous *musnad* that included editions, earlier studies, arrangement, dating, the number of ḥadīth, and what distinguishes it from the *ṣaḥīḥ* and *sunan*, in particular the *Kutub al-Sitta* (the Six Books).<sup>91</sup>

In general, *ṣaḥīḥ* and *sunan* are the combination of the *muṣannaḥ* and *musnad* genre which organize topically and focus on ḥadīth with full *isnāds*. In this third/ninth century era, the *sunan* emerged earlier than the *ṣaḥīḥ* since among the earliest *sunan* are those of Sa‘īd b. Manṣūr al-Khurasānī (d. 227/842),<sup>92</sup> and of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī (d. 255/869).<sup>93</sup> The view that the wide increase of unauthentic ḥadīths although with *isnāds* led al-Bukhārī and Muslim to produce ḥadīth collections, famously known the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* devoted only to ḥadīths whose *isnāds* they felt met the requirements of authenticity.<sup>94</sup> Tarif Khalidi and Uri Rubin who were concerned with Islamic historiography and the development of the ḥadīth tradition have stressed that the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* represent the culmination of ḥadīth study.<sup>95</sup> After the Quran, the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* are the most venerated books in Sunni Islam.<sup>96</sup> Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s works were the first product of what Muhammad Abdul Rauf has termed as ‘the *ṣaḥīḥ* movement.’<sup>97</sup> Subsequently their works had influence on their students and contemporaries such as ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Jārūd (d. 307/919-920), Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923), Abu Hafs ‘Umar al-Bujayrī al-Samarqandī (d. 311/924), Sa‘īd b. Sakan (d. 353/964), and also Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* is usually regarded as the last installment of this movement.

According to Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, some scholars were concerned with the greater importance of legal and doctrinal ḥadīths than historical dating, arguing the precise

<sup>89</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Amr al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-Zakḥkhār al-Ma‘rūf bi Musnad al-Bazzār*, ed. Maḥfūz al-Raḥmān Zayn Allāh, ‘Adil b. Sa‘d, and Sabrī ‘Abd al-Khāliq al-Shāfi‘ī, 19 vols. (Beirut: Muassasa ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān and Madīna: Maktaba al-‘Ulūm wa al-Hikam, 1988).

<sup>90</sup> Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. al-Muthannā al-Tamīmī, *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī*, ed. Ḥusayn Sālim Asad, 16 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Ma‘mūn li al-Turāth, 1989).

<sup>91</sup> Christopher Melchert, “The *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: How it was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books”, *Islam-Zeitschrift Fur Geschichte Und Kultur des Islamischen Orients* 82, no. 1 (2005), 32-51.

<sup>92</sup> Sa‘īd b. Manṣūr b. Shu‘ba al-Khurasānī, *Sunan Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥman al-A‘zamī, 2 vols. (India: al-Dār al-Salafiyya, 1982).

<sup>93</sup> ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī, *Musnad al-Dārimī al-Ma‘rūf bi Sunan al-Dārimī*, ed. Ḥusayn Sālim Asad al-Darrānī, 4 vols. (Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Mughnī li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2000).

<sup>94</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, “Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth,” 277. Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth Muḥammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 31.

<sup>95</sup> Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 224. Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43.

<sup>96</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, “Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth,” 274.

date of Prophet's battles, for instance has no practical utility for a Muslim.<sup>98</sup> This emphasis grew even more pronounced after the second half of the third century as can be seen in the remainder of *Kutub al-Sitta* namely Abu Dāwūd,<sup>99</sup> al-Tirmidhī,<sup>100</sup> al-Nasā'ī,<sup>101</sup> and Ibn Mājah's *Sunan*.<sup>102</sup> James Robson has published a series of articles that devotes attention to studying the use and the transmission of each of these ḥadīth collections.<sup>103</sup> He examines how these *Sunan*, like other books, was handed down to succeeding generations by chain of authority. In dealing with the transmission, he has been mainly dependent on variety versions of the recognized transmitter for those books. He comments on this transmission, and says

In the gospels as they stand we do not have the various elements of the sources separated out for us as we do through the *isnāds* of Muslim tradition, where, at least apparently, the transmission is traced back to the source.<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, for a ḥadīth to have probative value and to be included in the books, every transmitter in the *isnād* must be known for his/her reliability, and the biographical dictionaries comprise evaluations of the thousands of men and women who transmitted ḥadīth.<sup>105</sup> Relying upon one of al-Dhahabī's biographical dictionaries that is *Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffāz*, Scott Lucas figures out how al-Dhahabī articulates the evolution of the ḥadīth literature from the time of the Prophet to seventh/thirteenth century.<sup>106</sup> Lucas is of the opinion that

The twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* structure of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffāz* answers this very question, as it describes the historical process of *ḥadīth* scholarship by carving a manageable number of 'generations' out of a seven-hundred-year period across a vast geographical area.<sup>107</sup>

## 1.2 The Beginning of the Biographical Dictionaries

<sup>98</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 61.

<sup>99</sup> James Robson, "The Transmission of Abu Dāwūd's *Sunan*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 9, no. 3 (1952), 579 – 588.

<sup>100</sup> James Robson, "The Transmission of al-Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1954), 258 – 270.

<sup>101</sup> James Robson, "The Transmission of al-Nasā'ī's *Sunan*", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1956), 38 – 59.

<sup>102</sup> James Robson, "The Transmission of Ibn Mājah's *Sunan*", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 3, no. 2 (1958), 129 – 141.

<sup>103</sup> See also James Robson, "The Transmission of Muslim's *Sahih*", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1949), 46 – 61.

<sup>104</sup> James Robson, "Ibn Ishaq's Use of the *Isnād*", *Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library* 38, no. 2 (1956), 465.

<sup>105</sup> Christopher Melchert, "Sectaries in the Six Books: Evidence for Their Exclusion from the Sunni Community", *The Muslim World* 82, no. 3 – 4, (1992), 287.

<sup>106</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics: Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 63.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



Unquestionably, biographical dictionaries remain the major repository of information on the medieval Muslim scholars and they are vital for us in order to tease out what is of relevance to our understanding of that world.<sup>108</sup> Marica Hermansen lists *sīra*, *ṭabaqāt*, *tadhkira*, *malfūzat*, *manāqib*, certain ḥadīth collections, *faḍā'il*, *khaṣā'is*, and *ilm al-rijāl* as genres in the types of biographical dictionaries. The aforementioned draws attention to what constitutes the genre as a form which may be chosen, in order to convey information within a particular situation.<sup>109</sup>

Whereas Waddad al-Qadi defined it as “a prose work whose primary structure is that of a series of biographies, regardless of the order in which these biographies succeed each other.”<sup>110</sup> She elaborates further two categories of biographical dictionaries that fall into this definition. First, “general biographical dictionaries” which contain biographies of persons from all walks of life, professions, epochs, places, ranks, beliefs and so forth such as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1362) *al-Wāfi bi al-Wafayāt* and Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī's (d. 1089/1678) *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*. Second are “restricted biographical dictionaries” which include biographies of individuals who share one common, yet specific, trait, as most frequently these learned persons belong to the same discipline of scholarship.<sup>111</sup> Title of books like Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī's (d. 444/1052) *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā'*, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idris al-Rāzī's (d. 277/890) *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Tābi'in*, Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī's (d. 430/1038) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī's (d. 476/1083) *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā'*, Ibn Sallam al-Jumāḥī's (d. 232/846) *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu'arā'*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī's (d. 379/989) *Ṭabaqāt al-Naḥwiyyīn wa-l-Lughawiyyīn*, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī's (d. 380/990) (*Muntakhab*) *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma*, Yāqut al-Ḥamawī's (d. 626/1228) *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* indicate that successive generations of interpreters of the Qur'ān, transmitters of ḥadīth, sufīs, jurists, poets, grammarians, philologists, philosophers, and compilers are included among the litterateurs.

Before analysing the various elements of the biographical dictionaries through an origin, motives, organizations, and contents, a word must be said about the term biographical dictionaries itself. Precisely in Arabic, there is no similar word equal to biography or biography dictionaries. Arabic terminologies related to biography include *tarjama*, *sīra* and

<sup>108</sup> Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 5.

<sup>109</sup> Marica K. Hermansen, “Survey Article: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Islamic Biographical Materials,” *Religion* 18, no. 2 (1988), 165.

<sup>110</sup> Waddad al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance” in *The Book in the Islamic World*, ed. George N. Atiyeh, (SUNY Press and The Library of Congress, 1995), 94-95.

<sup>111</sup> Waddad al-Qadi, *Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance*, 94-95.

*tārīkh*.<sup>112</sup> As mentioned by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī, the use of *tarjama* tends to be restricted to shorter biography, while *sīra* was first used in literature for the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, but this did not exclude its use for others.<sup>113</sup> Along with *rijāl*, the term *ṭabaqāt* pl. of *ṭabaqa* has been widely and frequently used to address the title of biographical dictionaries.

The technical term used for it was formed from the root *ṭ-b-q* and the verbal noun of the third conjugation, *ṭibaq*. Lexicographers also find a similar meaning in the forms *ṭabaq* and *ṭibq*.<sup>114</sup> In the Qur’ān it is mentioned four times in total, the term *ṭabaq* appeared twice in one verse in a temporal sense “*laṭabaqan ‘an ṭabaq* (from plane to plane),” analogous things which follow each other.<sup>115</sup> Other expression approximating the term *ṭabaqāt* is *ṭibāq* appears twice in separate verses in a spatial sense “*sab ‘a samāwāt ṭibāqa* (seven heavens in harmony),” lying above one another.<sup>116</sup> In the ḥadīth, the Prophet used to supplicate for rain “*Allāhumma asqina ghaythan mughīthan ṭabaqā* (O Allāh bless us with rain that is reviving and accordingly),” occurring together in space or time or harmonious.<sup>117</sup>

The semantic range of meaning suggests putting a thing upon, or higher in position comparable by this means. One says *ṭabbaqa al-saḥābu al-jawwā* (the clouds covered the atmosphere);<sup>118</sup> *taṭābaqa al-shay’ayn* (the two things are similar, or identical);<sup>119</sup> *taṭābaqu ‘alā al-amr* (they agreed on something).<sup>120</sup> Since *ṭabaq* or ‘cover’, is on top, thus the layer or level to which people belong is called *ṭabaqāt*. Considering the strata of people are various, the occurrence characterizing these strata are also called *ṭabaqāt*, as in the saying ‘*fulān min al-dunyā ‘alā ṭabaqatin shattā*’, so and so passes from one earthly state to another.<sup>121</sup> Thence *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* is the “Book of classes” of characters arranged by “categories” and organised into “generations” of people. It also has been discussed in detail by Ibrahim

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>113</sup> Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghani, *Al-Tarājim wa al-Siyar* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed), 6.

<sup>114</sup> See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2003), 9/88.

<sup>115</sup> *Ṭabaq*, masculine indefinite noun as this term is somewhat ambiguous passage alluding to either the states of creation or the soul’s ascension to heaven. You shall surely ride stage after stage. The Qur’ān, 84:19.

<sup>116</sup> *Ṭibaq*, masculine plural indefinite adjective as this term is connection with the seven seamless heavens. Who created seven layers. The Qur’ān, 67:3 and 71:15.

<sup>117</sup> See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 9/88.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Adel S. Gamal, *The Organizational Principles in Ibn Sallam’s Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu‘arā’: A Reconsideration*, in *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature*, ed. J.R. Smart, (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1996), 199.

Hafsi<sup>122</sup> and Adel Gamal who have articulated the semantic breadth of the word *ṭabaqāt*, which can mean class, value generation, merit, degree, and group, as well as hierarchy, covering, and all-embracing.<sup>123</sup>

These episodes of the *kutub al-ṭabaqāt* or biographical dictionaries form a durable chapter in the history of Islamic religious thought. Those works were produced from the early second century of the *hijra* until today, and this tradition continues and is typified in the unpublished biographical dictionary of the women scholars of ḥadīth by Akram Nadwi.<sup>124</sup> It would be very difficult to fix an exact date for the first occurrence of biographical dictionaries as a historical work. However, it is generally considered that the first book of this genre was *Ṭabaqāt Ahl al-ʿIlm wa al-Jahl* written by Wāṣil b. ʿAtāʾ (d. 130/748). Unfortunately, of this figure, there remains nothing but a name and no appreciable fragments of his writing have survived to enable us to claim him as the first Muslim biographical dictionaries writer. The evidence used in support of this view comes from Ibn Khallikan's entry of Wāṣil b. ʿAtāʾ and his works.<sup>125</sup>

To some extent, the question on the origin is the product of the various orientations and opinions among scholars who addressed this topic. Franz Rosenthal relates the advent of biographical dictionaries to the development of history in the sense of a sequence of dated events when he states, "In many Muslim minds, history thus becomes synonymous with biography."<sup>126</sup> He also suggested that the genre division is "genuinely Islamic" and it is the "oldest chronological division which presented itself to Muslim historical thinking."<sup>127</sup> Like Rosenthal, Hamilton Gibb articulated that the biographical dictionary is "a wholly indigenous creation of the Islamic Community and it developed simultaneously in close association with historical composition."<sup>128</sup> His thesis anchors the origin of the biographical

<sup>122</sup> Ibrahim Hafsi, "Recherches Sur Le Genre 'Ṭabaqāt' Dans La Littérature Arabe", *Arabica* 23, no. 1 (1976), 227-265.

<sup>123</sup> Adel S. Gamal, *The Organizational Principles in Ibn Sallam's Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shuʿarāʾ*, 199. See also Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics: Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam*, 47.

<sup>124</sup> Akram Nadwi mentioned in the preface of his book, "This book was conceived as a translation of the *muqaddima* to an as yet unpublished biographical dictionary in Arabic of the women scholars of ḥadīth in Islamic history". See Akram Nadwi, *al-Muḥaddithāt* (Oxford: Interface Publication, 2007), xi.

<sup>125</sup> Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1972), 6/11.

<sup>126</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1952), 89.

<sup>127</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 93; See also Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics: Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam*, 47.

<sup>128</sup> Sir Hamilton Gibb, "Islamic Biographical Literature" in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 54.

genre in Arab culture and rejects the notion that it was a foreign import. Principally intending to criticise the Chinese tradition of writing about political history, he indicates,

The conception that underlies the oldest biographical dictionaries is that the history of the Islamic Community is essentially the contribution of individual men and women to the building up and transmission of its specific culture; that is these persons (rather than the political governors) who represent or reflect the active forces in Muslim society in their respective spheres; and that their individual contributions are worthy of being recorded for future generations.<sup>129</sup>

Tarif Khalidi also discusses the relationship between history and biographical dictionaries in his article “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment.” He suggests the origin have been the offspring of the two Islamic disciplines of ḥadīth and *tārīkh* (history) and to have satisfied the need for accurate and trustworthy biographies of caliphs, military commanders, state officials and the like.<sup>130</sup>

Taking up Otto Loth’s opinion, Heffening argued that the biographical dictionaries genre “owes its origin to the interest of the Arabs (in the pre-Islamic and early period) in genealogy (*nasab*) and biography” for the reason he did not believe that it could have had its origin in ḥadīth criticism.<sup>131</sup> He added, here the Arabs interest with genealogical indices could easily be expanded to biographical collections, the concept of classes or categories was not employed exclusively for transmitters of prophetic traditions.<sup>132</sup> For before books about classes of Qur’ān readers, legists, poets, and singers appeared as early as, if not earlier than, those of ḥadīth transmitters. Hence, the genealogical aspect of the biographical collections reflects the significance of lineage in general, and the relative importance of matrilineal and patrilineal ascription in particular, to the Arabs.<sup>133</sup>

However, another analyst of the issue, Ibrāhīm Hafsi in an extensive article has responded to Heffening’s viewpoint. He argued that there is a possibility this genre does not owe its origin to ḥadīth studies, but its relationship with ḥadīth is obviously incontestable. Indeed to attribute the advent of this genre solely to the taste for genealogy seems difficult.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Hamilton Gibb, “Islamic Biographical Literature,” 54.

<sup>130</sup> Tarif Khalidi, “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries” in *The Muslim World* 63, no. 1 (1973): 53.

<sup>131</sup> W. Heffening, “*Ṭabaqāt*” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1913-1963), Supplement p. 214.

<sup>132</sup> Such *nasab* was not simply a tribal or communal concern since it extended also to horses, suggesting the chivalrous connotations of the subject. In general, *nasab* must be thought of first as an organizing principle, an epistemic instrument which relates history by arranging it in a family-tree structure. Secondly, *nasab* emphasizes the *fuhul* among both men and horses, which among other things meant ‘producers of progeny’. See Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 49.

<sup>133</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Supplement p. 214. See also Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 4.

<sup>134</sup> Ibrahim Hafsi, *Recherches Sur Le Genre ‘Ṭabaqāt’ Dans La Littérature Arabe*, 227.

The main objective was to convey to later generations its authentic purity and without modification as it was revealed through the Prophet. After listing the major biographical dictionaries based on historiographical framework (types of person and era), he then formulates his own classification of biographical dictionaries compilers as initiators, innovators or imitators.<sup>135</sup>

Nevertheless, the contemporary scholars concede the possibility that the second century *hijra* scholars have invented the *ṭabaqāt*; but there can be no doubt they adopted it for a specific purpose. Drawing from the Prophet's ḥadīth, "scholars are the heirs to the Prophet,"<sup>136</sup> the followers with a sense of responsibility take steps to collect and record as much as possible about the life of the Prophet, his Companions, and the succeeding generations.<sup>137</sup> This led on to an interest in the ḥadīth scholars as a matter of course, developed in close association with *isnād* where at times ḥadīth scholars were criticised for making the *isnād* their major interest, rather than the substantive report transmitted. Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi asserts "the pursuit of ḥadīth [was] neither by the government and the many sectarian leaders, nor their own personal interests, but [was] 'by the pure love of pure traditions'".<sup>138</sup>

It follows therefore that the basic qualification for inclusion in the general run of biographical dictionaries is the contribution brought by the individual to the scholarship of the particular field in one aspect. On the other hand, the selection of the biographer is determined by the appropriate condition to which his concern is directed and this latter in turn established as a rule for the discipline.<sup>139</sup> Hamilton Gibb argues that corresponding limitations continued to be observed as the practice of biography spread; while religious scholars continued to confine themselves to Qur'ān or ḥadīth, scholars, jurists, and other religious classes, men of letters compiled dictionaries of poets and writers, administrative officials' dictionaries of viziers and secretaries, scientist and philosophers' dictionaries of their own kind.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Marica K. Hermansen, *Survey Article: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Islamic Biographical Materials*, 165.

<sup>136</sup> Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*. 1<sup>st</sup> edn., Riyād: Maktabah al-Ma'ārif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 5/47; Ibn Hibbān, *Sahih Ibn Hibbān bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt, (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla, 1988), 1/289; Bukhārī wrote in his title chapter "*Wa inna al-'Ulamā' waratha al-Anbiyā'*" (and indeed the scholars are the heirs of the Prophet)." See also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Faqīh wa al-Mutafaqqih* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1980), 1/17.

<sup>137</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghanī, *Al-Tarājim wa al-Siyar*, 6.

<sup>138</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 39.

<sup>139</sup> Sir Hamilton Gibb, *Islamic Biographical Literature*, 54.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

As George Makdisi indicates the motive of the genre is when the theological movement arose in reaction to encounters with foreign systems of thought such as Christianity, non-theistic Greek thought, and others. This reaction brought about another, scholars of ḥadīth felt the need to identify the lines of scholars who had legitimate authority to determine Islamic doctrine.<sup>141</sup> Since the earliest organized disciplines in Islam were the sciences of ḥadīth transmission, the early biographical works are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements both in general works and in the histories of particular cities and provinces. In turn this influenced the collection of biographical dictionaries on other classes of individuals investigating the Qur'ān, law, Arabic language and so forth but it never totally deviated from the pattern linking it with the sciences of ḥadīth.<sup>142</sup> Seemingly the purpose of collection in different circumstance shows, as Albert Hourani states “the history of the Muslim community was essentially that of the unbroken transmission of truth and high Islamic culture.”<sup>143</sup>

### 1.3 Biographical Dictionaries of Ḥadīth Transmitters

Throughout the history of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, there is a great difference in scope, plan, and detailed contents, according to the main theme of the compilers. This genre unquestionably is one of the fundamental sources of *‘ilm al-rijāl* (the science of men), a method in the study of ḥadīth. Iftikhar Zaman in his article “The Science of Rijāl as a Method in the Study of Ḥadīths” shows how ḥadīth study based on *‘ilm al-rijāl* is similar to the methods of scholars working within the classical style of ḥadīth study. He suggests the method of basing judgements on the qualities of transmitters by gathering variant versions of ḥadīth narrated by them is implicit in biographical dictionaries beginning from the middle of the second/seventh century.<sup>144</sup>

Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi in the chapter of Biographical Dictionaries includes the chronology, biography and criticism as a literature which deals with *‘ilm al-rijāl*.<sup>145</sup> These types of literature later divided into “general” and “particular” works. Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*

<sup>141</sup> George Makdisi, “Ṭabaqāt-Biography: Law and Orthodoxy in Classical Islam,” *Islamic Studies* Vol. 32, No. 4, Winter 1993), 373.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Albert Hourani, *The History of Arabic Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 165-166.

<sup>144</sup> Iftikhar Zaman, “The Science of *Rijāl* as a Method in the Study of Ḥadīths” in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1994): 1-34.

<sup>145</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 91-106; *Rijāl*, pl. of *rajul*, a common Arabic word for “man”, used specifically in Arabic literature for transmitters of ḥadīth. See G. H. A. Juynboll, “Ridjal”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs and G. Lecomte, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 8/514.

*al-Kabīr*, Bukhārī's Three Histories, Ibn Abī Khaythama's *Tārīkh*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* and other early works during the third/eight centuries are categorised under the "general" rubric.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, biographical dictionaries of Companions, biographical dictionaries of particular towns or provinces, and biographical dictionaries of transmitters who belonged to schools of law are considered as "particular" biographical dictionaries.<sup>147</sup>

For early biographical dictionaries especially preceding the third/eighth centuries, it is hard to outline the arrangement and the structure of their contents, as prior to the first surviving work, Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* have been lost. Given the importance of this valuable source for contemporary scholars, a considerable number of studies have investigated it.<sup>148</sup> Possibly from Ibn Nadīm's famous book *al-Fihrist* we can determine at least two works that preceded it, namely *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822)<sup>149</sup> and *Ṭabaqāt man Rawā 'an al-Nabī min Aṣḥābihi* of Haytham b. 'Adī (d. 207/822).<sup>150</sup> Fuat Sezgin points out Ibn Ḥajar's (d. 852/1449) *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba* in the entry of Umm 'Abd Allāh bt. Aws al-Anṣāriyya cited a ḥadīth that is credited to al-Mu'āfā b. 'Imrān's (d. 185/801) *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil*.<sup>151</sup> However, coming out of the later works which were based on them, and which still exist, the general idea of this genre reasonably can be derived. As Siddiqi proposes, their contents consisted mainly of: short descriptions of the genealogies and dates of birth and death; some biographical matters; and

<sup>146</sup> They remain as general works, which are, include of general information of all transmitters, or at least of all the notable ones among them who were acknowledged to the author. This body of information supported mostly with names, paidonymics, nicknames and year of death. In addition, sometimes it provides birth date and place, teachers, travels, scholarly works, and the comments of other authorities about transmitters. During the period of ḥadīth compilation, it endeavoured to include all possible information that would characterize the person so as to minimize the possibility of error in the transmission of a ḥadīth, by establishing whether a transmitter could have been a contemporary of another; and if contemporaries, whether their road had crossed; and if so, whether one could have received his information from the other; and if so, whether he was trustworthy, and so on. See also Mustafa A'zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 7.

<sup>147</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 91-106.

<sup>148</sup> Aḥmad Nazir Attasi, *A History of Ibn Sa'd's Biographical Dictionary Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, Unpublished dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 2009; Michael Cooperson, "Ibn Sa'd" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 311, *Arabic Literary Culture, 500-925*, ed. Michael Cooperson and S.M. Toorawa, (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2005), 193-204; J. W. Fuck, "Ibn Sa'd" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, ed. P. J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 922-923.

<sup>149</sup> Akram Diyā' al-'Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, (Madina: Maktaba al-'Ulūm wa al-Hikam), 75; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 111.

<sup>150</sup> Ibn al- Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 112.

<sup>151</sup> Sezgin credits al-Mu'āfā among the earliest city historians of the Abbasid period, arguing that Ibn Ḥajar quotes from al-Mu'āfā's *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil* and Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Azdī (d. 330/941) used it as well but under a title *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Muhaddithin*. This credit later was argued by C. F. Robinson in his article "al-Mu'āfā b. 'Imrān and the Beginning of the Ṭabaqāt Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 116, No. 1 (Jan – Mar., 1996), pp 144 – 120.

a brief critique of their reliability, backed up with the opinions of important authorities and contemporaries.<sup>152</sup>

Analysis of the format of Ibn Sa‘d’s work demonstrates that all of the features mentioned above, as well as others, may be found. Ibn Sa‘d begins his *Ṭabaqāt* without an introduction; he writes a lengthy biography and history of the Prophet Muḥammad and earlier prophets, amounting to a quarter of the text. Immediately following the Prophet’s *sīra*, there is what amounts to a description of objective:

“Naming those whom we have counted from the Companions of the Prophet, from the *muhājirīn* and *anṣār*, and those who lived after them from their offspring and their followers, of the people of knowledge (*fiqh*), learning (‘*ilm*), and transmission of ḥadīth, and what has come down to us about their names, genealogies, agnomens, and reports, class by class”.<sup>153</sup>

This description demonstrates a clear theme that he is aiming for. However, there is no clear indication of the structure and arrangement of the massive biographies of the Companions and the next generation who lived in the first two centuries of Islam. Roughly, he continues the next section with the classes of Companions; the Companions who delivered legal opinions in Madīna during the Prophet’s lifetime, who went to battle at Badr and their descendants, and who became Muslim before the conquest of Makka. The next generation, approximately one-half of the book, is devoted to those who transmitted ḥadīth from the Companions until his time.

Michael Cooperson states the importance of *isnād*-based learning is clear in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, which is divided into sections corresponding to successive generations of ḥadīth transmitters.<sup>154</sup> The difference between this work and previous ḥadīth works was the emphasis on the biographies of transmitters with little or no attention paid to the ḥadīth itself. Ibn Sa‘d clearly adheres to the organisation of the *musnad* and *ṭabaqāt* as well in that the biographies of the Prophet, his Companions and those who followed them, are arranged by generations and geographic origin. There were many others in Ibn Sa‘d’s generation whose reputation for scholarship and *isnād* criticism was acknowledged by their peers and subsequent scholars. But Ibn Sa‘d, who is quoted extensively by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī<sup>155</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 94.

<sup>153</sup> Waddad al-Qadi, *Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance*, 95.

<sup>154</sup> Michael Cooperson, “Ibn Sa‘d,” 194.

<sup>155</sup> al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3/266.



was the first surviving work using the technique of ascribing information through a chain of transmitters predominantly employed by ḥadīth scholars.

Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī updates frequently his book *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh Sunna* regarding the available list of biographical dictionaries and ḥadīth collections.<sup>156</sup> Discussing the manuscripts and vanished works quoted from early ḥadīth scholars in their books, he concludes twelve types of sub-genres under the list of biographical dictionaries. Under the chapter of books on *'ilm al-rijāl* in the first five centuries of *hijra*, he includes *Kutub al-Ṣaḥāba* (The Books of Companions), *Kutub al-Ṭabaqāt* (The Books of Generations), *Kutub al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* (The Books of Impugning and Approving), *Kutub al-Rijāl al-Madhkūrīn fī al-Kutub al-Sitta wa Ghayriha* (The Books of Transmitters in Six Canonical Books and Others), *Kutub Ma'rifa al-Asmā'* (The Books of Names), *Kutub al-Asmā' wa al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb* (The Books of Names, Paidonymics and Nicknames), *Kutub al-Mu'talif wa al-Mukhtalif* (The Books of Homographic and Gentilics Names), *Kutub al-Muttafiq wa al-Muftariq wa al-Mushtabih* (The Books of Homonymic, Gentilics, and Resembling Names), *Kutub al-Wafayāt* (The Books of Obituaries), *Tawārīkh al-Rijāl al-Mahalliyya* (The Histories of Local Transmitters), *Ma'ājim al-Shuyūkh* (Lexicons of Teachers), and *Kutub al-Rijāl 'inda al-Shī'ā* (The Books of Transmitters by Shī'ā).<sup>157</sup>

Like 'Umarī, Maṭar al-Zahrānī intends to list works but solely of biographical dictionaries in Sunnite ḥadīth studies. He uses 'Umarī's book as a framework of his studies when he lists and picks five sub-genres, included under the biographical dictionaries in the first five centuries. Crediting 'Umarī as a source of reference in discussing accessible manuscripts, he informs readers whether the manuscripts have been edited, published, or studied by M.A and Ph. D students. Both 'Umarī and al-Zahrānī do not divide biographical dictionaries into general and particular. However, they usually organize the available works under similar title order, so that, for example, they will gather all *ṭabaqāt* works together.

In view of this, among the *ṭabaqāt* genre mentioned by them are *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822),<sup>158</sup> *Ṭabaqāt man Rawā' an al-Nabī min*

<sup>156</sup> Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 3; Abdul Rauf Zafar supplies a list of biographical dictionaries (extant or lost, published or unpublished) which divided into several categories in his article. See Abdul Rauf Zafar, "Transmission of Ḥadīth and Biography", *Islamic Quarterly*, vol. 35, no.2 (1991).

<sup>157</sup> Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 59.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 75. See also Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* ed. Reda Tajaddud (Tehran: n.p., 1971), 111. See also Michael Cooperson, "*Ibn Sa'd*", 195.

*Aṣḥābihi* of al-Haytham b. ‘Adī (d. 207/822),<sup>159</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* of Muḥammad b. Sa‘d (d. 230/844),<sup>160</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Madīnī (d. 234/848),<sup>161</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir al-Ḥizāmī (d. 236/850),<sup>162</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt (d. 240/854),<sup>163</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm b. ‘Amr al-Dimashqī (d. 245/859),<sup>164</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Burqī (d. 249/863),<sup>165</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. Ibrāhīm b. Sumay‘ al-Dimashqī (d. 259/872),<sup>166</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874),<sup>167</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Tābi‘īn* of Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idris al-Razī (d. 277/890),<sup>168</sup> *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī (d. 281/894),<sup>169</sup> *Ṭabaqāt al-Asmā’ al-Mufrada min al-Ṣaḥāba wa al-Tābi‘īn wa Aṣḥab al-Ḥadīth* of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Harun al-Bardijī (d. 301/913),<sup>170</sup> *Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn bi-Aṣbahān* of Abū al-Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. Ḥayyān al-Anṣārī al-Iṣbahanī (d. 369/979).<sup>171</sup>

Meanwhile, G.H.A. Juynboll argues that the *ṭabaqāt* evolved and there emerged a more and more specific writing-style among ḥadīth scholars from second/eight to ninth/fifteenth centuries. According to him, subsequent to the *ṭabaqāt* being arranged according to generations and place of residence, this genre was abandoned in favour of another arrangement, a gradually more strictly observed alphabetical order of transmitters. He added, that following the two works of Bukhārī’s *Tārīkh al-Kabīr* and Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa Ta‘dīl*, biographers follow the information contained in already existing works. Eventually, this development came to a stalemate with the work of Ibn Hajar’s (d. 852/1449) *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, considered the most complete list of transmitters. However,

<sup>159</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 112; Michael Cooperson, “*Ibn Sa‘d*”, 195.

<sup>160</sup> Muḥammad b. Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Dār al-Khānījī, 2001).

<sup>161</sup> Al-Ḥākim, *Ma‘rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 71. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth* ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. ‘Abdullāh al-Khuḍayr and Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh al-Fuḥayd (Riyadh: Dār al-Minhāj, 2005), 4/502.

<sup>162</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/502; Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 76.

<sup>163</sup> Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1993). See also Khalīfa’s *History on the Umayyad Dynasty (660-750)* translated by Carl Wurtzel and edited by Robert G. Hoyland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

<sup>164</sup> Al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Khawlanī, *Tārīkh Dāriyyā* (Damascus: Maṭbū‘āt al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī, 1950), 100.

<sup>165</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, (Hyderabad: Dāira al-Ma‘ārif al-Ni‘āmiyya, 1325H), 2/32; Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/502.

<sup>166</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz* (Beirut: Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 2/142; Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1982), 13/55; Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/502.

<sup>167</sup> Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *al-Ṭabaqāt* (Riyadh: Dār al-Hijra, 1991).

<sup>168</sup> Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 82.

<sup>169</sup> Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh Abī Zur‘a al-Dimashqī* ed. Shukr Allāh Ni‘mat Allāh al-Qūjānī (Damascus: Majma‘ al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya, 1980) 1/50.

<sup>170</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-Bardijī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Asmā’ al-Mufrada min al-Ṣaḥāba wa al-Tābi‘īn wa Aṣḥab al-Ḥadīth* ed. Sakīna al-Shihābī (Damascus: Dār Ṭalās, 1987).

<sup>171</sup> Abū al-Shaykh al-Iṣbahanī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn bi-Iṣbahān wa al-Wāridīn alayhā* ed. ‘Abd al-Ghafūr ‘Abd al-Ḥaq al-Balūshī (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1992).

this biographical dictionary limits the transmitter who occurs in six canonical scholar's books.<sup>172</sup>

Understandably, this limited inclusion of transmitters after fifth/twelfth centuries were probably developed along with the canons as they became the common language for discussing the Prophet's ḥadīth. Jonathan Brown analyses and focuses on how the two highest six canonical i.e. *Saḥīḥayn* which were controversial when they were written, acquired such prestige by the beginning of the sixth/eleventh century. The most important contributor to the process of canonisation was evidently Ibn Ḥibbān's student al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūri. These *Saḥīḥayn* were not just used to prove the authenticity of ḥadīth, but also to authoritatively shape the study of ḥadīth. Brown asserts latter scholars like Khatīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Salāḥ employ it to elaborate the tenets of ḥadīth transmission, criticism and its applications in deriving law.<sup>173</sup>

As mentioned earlier, each of biographical dictionaries in ḥadīth studies uses different methods for the inclusion the data. From the list books and the author year of death given by 'Umarī and al-Zahrānī, we notice the change in writing style of biographical dictionaries as pointed out by Siddiqi, Juynboll and Brown. In Ibn Ḥibbān's era, beside *ṭabaqāt* some scholars compose the biographies of the Prophet's Companions like Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baghawī's (d. 317/929) *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba* and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's (d. 463/1071) *al-Istī'āb fī Ma'rifa al-Aṣḥāb*. Some deal exclusively with reliable or unreliable transmitters: The *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* of Ibn Ḥibbān and *Kitāb al-Ḍu'āfā' wa al-Matrūkīn* of al-Nasā'ī are examples. Some record only names, paidonymics or patronymics, and nicknames; to this class belong the various works on *al-Asmā' wa al-Kunā*, *al-Kunā wa al-Asmā'* of Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī (d. 310/922) and the well-known *Kitāb al-Ansāb* of al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1166). Still others contain biographical details of all transmitters who lived in or visited any particular town: examples include the *Ṭabaqāt 'Ulamā' Ifriqiya wa Tūnis* of Abū al-Arab Muḥammad b. Tamīm al-Qayrawānī (d. 333/944) and others. After fifth/eleventh centuries as discussed above, biographers begin to restrict themselves to offering biographies of transmitters used in particular collections of ḥadīth, or in a group of collections. To this class belong a large number of works which deal with the lives of the transmitters on whom al-Bukhārī or Muslim, or the authors of all the six canonical works have relied.

<sup>172</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 134-35.

<sup>173</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 247.

### 1.3.1 Biographical Dictionaries on Transmitters of a Town or Province

Biographical materials of local towns arguably are a part of scattered Muslim historical compositions, and can only be perceived from an early period studying them with reference to other cultural activities and developments. To analyse them by themselves leads only to a fractional and ambiguous understanding of their origins and development. Ann Lambton in her paper *Persian Biographical Literature* suggests local histories, geographical dictionaries, chronicles, autobiographies, and others as the source of biographical materials.<sup>174</sup> She further suggests the sense of loyalty to the region motivated the composition of biographical dictionaries.<sup>175</sup> Approximately every important town had several biographers who collected the lives of every important transmitter or literary figure who lived or visited it. Makkah, Madinah, Basra, Kufa, Wāsiṭ, Damascus, Antioch, Alexandria, Kairouan, Cordoba, Mawsil, Aleppo, Baghdad, Isfahan, Jurjan, Bukhara, Merv, and other places all produced their own ranking scholars.

‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī’s work is a detailed study of the development of Arabic historiography from the first/seventh to fourth/ninth century. He suggests that Arabic historiography originated almost simultaneously in three centres or schools, Madinah, Kufa and Basra.<sup>176</sup> The “Madinan School of History” reflected what al-Dūrī terms the “Islamic perspective” due to its focus on the life of the Prophet and the spread of Islam. These works materialized from the *sīra/maghāzī* scholars, for instance, ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/712), al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741), Musā b. ‘Uqba (d. 141/758), Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 159/770), and al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822) maintained the critical standards of ḥadīth scholarship.<sup>177</sup> Early works from this school were primarily of the *sīra/maghāzī* type, but several of them also turned their attention to the history of the umma-contained many biographies of Madinah’s people.<sup>178</sup> The second perspective on historical writing developed out of the interest in the exploits and genealogies of the Arab tribes that is to say the “tribal perspective”.<sup>179</sup> Kufa and Basra are famously known as two new garrison towns that were centres of tribal activity. While the conquest added new feats and great achievements to the tribal topics available for study, and in like manner, the founding of an Islamic empire opened up new horizons for

<sup>174</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, “Persian Biographical Literature”, in B. Lewis, ed. *Historians of the Middle East*, (Oxford University Press, 1962), 141.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, edited and translated by Lawrence I. Conrad, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1983), 22.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 25.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 22.

investigation. Among the tribes there quickly developed a spirit of partisanship (‘aṣabiyya) for and pride in the particular garrison towns (*amṣār*) in which these tribes lived.<sup>180</sup>

Later, al-Dūrī suggests this regional history genre made its appearance in the third/ninth century.<sup>181</sup> The word *tārīkh* in the title of a regional history may as well refer to a *ṭabaqāt* work. Only the express statement that a particular history was arranged alphabetically or according to *ṭabaqāt* permits a classification.<sup>182</sup> The composition was an outgrowth of regional studies in ḥadīth; these give the biographies of the ḥadīth scholars who grew up in these cities or lived there for a length of time, and present these biographies in *ṭabaqāt* form.<sup>183</sup> Some of these works are largely concerned with the straightforward recounting of events out of a sense of devotion and pride for the region, although these usually also take account of the specialities and excellent qualities in question, its *khaṣā’is* and *faḍā’il*.<sup>184</sup>

Meanwhile, Rosenthal distinguishes two main strains of regional historical writing: “secular” and “theological local historiography”.<sup>185</sup> Proclaiming ḥadīth scholars, he proposes that early composition of this genre grew out of the need for an additional protection against the invention of spurious ḥadīth by determining the residence of transmitters. He also assumes it was favoured in its growth by the political rivalry between the various centres and schools of ḥadīth transmitters which were established in the cities of the Muslim territory. As reported in the name of the author of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Hamadhāniyyīn*, Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad (d. 384/994) says:

When religious scholarship has been cultivated in a place and scholars lived there in ancient and modern times, the students of ḥadīth and all those interested in ḥadīth should begin with a thorough study of the ḥadīth of their hometown and with acquiring a solid knowledge concerning the representatives of the science of ḥadīth there. After the students knows what is authentic and what is unauthentic in their ḥadīth, and is completely acquainted with the ḥadīth scholars in his city and their conditions, he may occupy himself with the ḥadīths of other places and with travelling in search of ḥadīth.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>180</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 42.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>182</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 145.

<sup>183</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 72.

<sup>184</sup> C E. Bosworth, “The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History” (Book Review) in *Islamic Quarterly* 18.1 (Jan 1, 1974), 47.

<sup>185</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 131.

<sup>186</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, *Tārīkh Baghdad*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islamī, 2001), 1/214; This passage is also translated by Franz Rosenthal in *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 144.

Abū al-Ḥasan Aslam b. Sahl who composed a work famously known as Bahshal's (d. 292/904) third/ninth century *Tārīkh al-Wāsiṭ* is among the oldest preserved work of the type. According to the editor Kurkis 'Awwād, there is only one manuscript of this work, which is incomplete; furthermore, a number of its leaves are out of order.<sup>187</sup> However, the original concept and form of this work is well presented. *Tārīkh al-Wāsiṭ* goes rather briefly into a discussion of the origin, early history, border of the city and its surroundings, and later deals with those of its religious scholars who are connected with the author by *isnād*.<sup>188</sup> The scholars grouped together according to their "generation" (*qarn*, instead of *ṭabaqa*, which was later on commonly used in this connection).

The first generation "are the Companion of the Prophet – those who served him, saw him, transmitted his ḥadīth, and heard him speak – who came to city of Wasit." The Companions consist of four men and six women but their biographies contained very little datum.<sup>189</sup> Bahshal continues the next section with the generation of second/eight, third/ninth century until his time.<sup>190</sup> They merely mentioned the name of the transmitter, his ḥadīth or aḥādīth, and those who transmitted on his authority as well as their ḥadīth or aḥādīth. Theoretically, the intention of quoting the ḥadīth, which connected with the name of a particular transmitter, was "to have every personality's position (in scholarship and the degree of his reliability) made known."<sup>191</sup>

In the course of time, Rosenthal observes that the following fourth/tenth century saw a widening of the notable groups that qualified for inclusion in this genre.<sup>192</sup> The result was a relaxation of the condition that each biography was to contain at least one ḥadīth, which its subject has transmitted. This resulted in the addition of a greater amount of biographical materials. However, this method was unpopular in certain places and in the generation after Bahshal, Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Qushayrī (d. 334/945), still followed the old custom in his *Tārīkh al-Raqqā*.<sup>193</sup> Concurrently, the alphabetical arrangement of the biographies made its appearance. As described by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 831/1428), Ibn Yāsīn's (d. 334/945) *Tārīkh Hira* is arranged alphabetically.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, it may have

<sup>187</sup> Aslam b. Sahl al-Wāsiṭī (Bahshal), *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, ed. Kurkis 'Awwād, (Beirut: 'Ālim al-Kutub, 1986), 7.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Aslam b. Sahl al-Wāsiṭī (Bahshal), *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, 7.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 145.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 145 and 393.

<sup>193</sup> Muḥammad b. Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qushayrī, *Tārīkh al-Raqqā*, ed. Ibrāhīm Šāliḥ, (Damascus: Dār al-Bashāir, 1998).

<sup>194</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I'ṭān bi al-Tawbīkh li-man Dhamm Ahl al-Tārīkh*, ed. Franz Rosenthal, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1986), 272.

been a much earlier practice, for example in local historiography. At about the same time, al-Bukhārī used the alphabetical arrangement for his *Tārīkh*, and local historians might have had the same idea to arrange the biographies alphabetically at that early date.<sup>195</sup> Among biographical dictionaries of local towns we may include what al-Sakhāwī mentions in *al-I'lān bi al-Tawbīkh*.<sup>196</sup>

### 1.3.2 Biographical Dictionaries on Companions of the Prophet

From the numbers of that appear later, it is evident important this topic for early ḥadīth scholars. “One who is intimately associated (with another)” is the primary meaning of the word *ṣaḥīb*, according to Ibn Manẓur. *Ṣaḥībahu* is explained “he associated, kept company, or consorted with him; ... (he accompanied him) he was, or became, his companion, associate, comrade, fellow, friend...”<sup>197</sup> In the Qur’ān, the trilateral root *ṣ ḥ b* occurs 97 times in six derived forms: once as the form verb *yushabū* (to protect), twice as the form

<sup>195</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, (Hyderabad: Maṭba‘a Jam‘iyya Dā‘ira al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1361H).

<sup>196</sup> Among them are; 1. Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Azraqī’s (d. 250/864) *Tārīkh Makka* (Abu al-Walīd Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka wa mā Jā’a fīha min al-Āthar*, ed. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Dahish (Maktaba al-Asadī, 2003); 2. Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. al-‘Abbās al-Fākihī’s (272/885) *Tārīkh Makka*, (Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I’lān bi al-Tawbīkh liman Dhamm Ahl al-Tārīkh*, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1986), 267); 3. Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Farāhīnānī’s (d. 247/861) *al-Tārīkh fī Rijāl al-Ḥadīth fī Marw*, (Under the entry of *al-Barāzajānī*. See al-Sam‘anī, *al-Ansāb*, (Beirut: Dār al-Janān, 1988), 1/305); 4. Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Sayyār al-Marwazī’s (d. 268/881) *Akhbār Marw*, (Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I’lān bi al-Tawbīkh liman Dhamm Ahl al-Tārīkh*, 263); 5. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Isā al-Baghdādī’s *Tārīkh al-Ḥimsiyyīn*, (“*Anba’ ana Abu Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Isa al-Baghdādī, qala fī Kitāb Tārīkh al- Ḥimsiyyīn ...*”. See Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), 11/457); 6. Abū ‘Arūba al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Mawdūd’s (d. 318/930) *Tārīkh Harrān*, (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/511); 7. ‘Alī b. al-Faḍl b. Tāhir al-Balkhī’s (d. 323/935) *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Balkh*, (Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I’lān bi al-Tawbīkh*, 243. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād wa Dhuyūlihi*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā’, (Beirut: Dār Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1417H), 20/167); 8. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Mustamlī’s *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Balkh*, (Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I’lān bi al-Tawbīkh*, 242); 9. Abū al-‘Arab Muḥammad b. Tamīm al-Qayrawānī’s (d. 333/944) *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Ifriqiyyā*, (Muḥammad b. Tamīm al-Qayrawānī, “Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Ifriqiyyā”, in *Classes des Savants de l’Ifriqiya*, ed. Mohammed Ben Cheneb, (Paris, 1915)); 10. Abū Zakariyā Yazīd b. Muḥammad b. Iyās al-Azdī’s (d. 334/945) *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil*, (Yazīd b. Muḥammad b. Iyās al-Azdī, *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil*, ed. ‘Alī Habība, (Cairo: Lajna lhyā’ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1967)); 11. Abū Sa’īd Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād familiar as Ibn al-A’rābī’s (d. 340/951) *Tārīkh al-Baṣra*, (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, 15/409); 12. Abū Sa’īd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Yūnus al-Ṣadafī al-Miṣrī’s (d. 347/958) *Tārīkh al-Miṣriyyīn*, (‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Yūnus al-Ṣadafī, *Tārīkh al-Miṣriyyīn*, in *Tārīkh Ibn Yūnus al-Ṣadafī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Fathī ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, (Beirut: Dār Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2000)); 13. Abū al-Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ja’far b. Ḥayyān al-Anṣārī’s (d.369/979) *Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn bi Aṣbahān wa al-Wāridīn ‘alayhā*, (Abū al-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn bi-Aṣbahān wa al-Wāridīn alayhā* ed. ‘Abd al-Ghafūr ‘Abd al-Ḥaq al-Balūshī (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risāla, 1992)); 14. Abū ‘Abd Allāh ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Khawlanī’s (d. 370/980) *Tārīkh Darāyyā*, (Al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Khawlanī, *Tārīkh Dāriyyā*, ed. Sa’īd al-Afghani, (Damascus: Maṭbū‘āt al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī, 1950)).

<sup>197</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 1/519.

verb *tuṣāhib* (to keep company), 78 times as the noun *aṣḥāb*, 10 times as the noun *ṣāhib*, four times as the noun *ṣāhibat*, and twice as the noun *ṣāhib*.<sup>198</sup>

In most cases, *ṣaḥāba* (sing. *ṣaḥabī*, other plural forms are *aṣḥab*, *ṣaḥb*, *ṣuḥbān*) is a synonym for Companion of the Prophet. The Prophet used to say: “Do not insult my Companions, for if one of you spent [by way of charity] what is equal to [mount] Uḥud in gold, he would not equal their measure or [even] half of it”.<sup>199</sup> Al-Bukhārī in the opening of The Merits of the Prophet’s Companion chapter states “and who so of the Muslims kept company with the Prophet or saw him, is of the Companions.”<sup>200</sup> Muḥammad Asad in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*’s translation raises a topic as to who is considered a Companion. He asserts the Companions themselves; they were undoubtedly of the opinion that not every Muslim who merely saw the Prophet was a Companion. Then he quotes Ibn Ṣalāḥ in his *Muqaddima*:

Somenone asked Anas b. Mālīk, “Is any of the Companions the Apostle of God still alive beside thee?” Anas answered, “Some Bedouins who saw him are still alive; but of his Companions – none.”

Siddiqi also recognizes that the exact qualifications necessary for being a Companion is not uniform according to Islamic scholars.<sup>201</sup> He states

Some have held that every Muslim who saw the Prophet was a Companion. Others have thought that only through long association with him could one join this category. The majority of writers, however, have held that the term may be applied to every adult Muslim who associated with the Prophet for any length of time. His near relations, his close friends, his attendants, as well as ordinary Muslims who saw him even once, are generally included within the definition.<sup>202</sup>

In spite of all of this, Muslim scholars in third/ninth century like Khalīfa b. Khayyāt and Bahshal conclude that the Companions are one *ṭabaqa*.<sup>203</sup> However, the classification in more than a dozen classes is based on their seniority and closeness to the Prophet, their precedence in embracing Islam, time of migration to Madinah, participation in the various battles and many others.<sup>204</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ in the chapter of the acquaintance of Companions

<sup>198</sup> corpus.quran.com

<sup>199</sup> “*La tasubbu aṣḥābī, fa-law anna aḥadakum anfaqa mithl Uḥud dhahaban mā balagha mudd aḥadihim walā naṣīfihī*”. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Naẓar Muḥammad al-Faryabī (Riyadh: Dār Tayba, 1426/2005), 2/1181 (2540).

<sup>200</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. Muḥammad Asad, (Lahore: Arafat Publications, 1993), 17.

<sup>201</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 14.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, (Baghdād: Maṭba‘a al-Ani, 1967), 32. Aslam b. Sahl al-Wāsiṭī (Bahshal), *Tārīkh Wāsiṭ*, 42. See also Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *A Textbook of Ḥadīth Studies*, (UK: Islamic Foundation, 2005), 47.

<sup>204</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *A Textbook of Ḥadīth Studies*, 47.



(*maʿrifa al-Ṣaḥāba*), lists the leading Companions in terms of transmitting ḥadīth, legal response, total numbers of Companions, *ṭabaqa* (ranks) among Companions, the first to convert to Islam, and the last of the Companions to die in regard to specific regions.<sup>205</sup> Prior to discussing the collective probity of Companions venerated from Qurʾānic passages and Prophetic ḥadīth, Ibn Ṣalāḥ establishes a way to characterize a Companion

In some cases, an individual is known to be a Companion by means of universal acknowledgement (*bi-l-tawātur*); in some cases, by numerous testimonies (*bi-l-istifāda*) falling short of universal acknowledgement; in some cases, by a few of the Companions relating that he is a Companion; and in some cases by his own statement or report – after his integrity is established – that he is a Companion. God knows best.<sup>206</sup>

In the opinion of Juynboll, Abū Ḥātim and his son were among the early ḥadīth scholars that never put the trustworthiness of the Companions to the test.<sup>207</sup> He added this was important as Sunnis needed to rehabilitate the Companions who participated in conflicts after the Prophet’s death. In the introduction to his edition of Muslim’s *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, Aʿzami affirms that there can be no doubt that the doctrine of the collective probity of the Companions were held by the majority of Muslim scholars.<sup>208</sup> Based upon this, Lucas explains how the scholars in third/ninth century address the problem of “warring *Ṣaḥāba*” which was addressed by later ḥadīth critics.<sup>209</sup> He suggests a role played by scholars like Ibn Saʿd, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Abī Shayba, his two student’s al-Bukhārī and Muslim in the of adoption of the belief in the collective probity of the Companions. Later he points out al-Wāqidī’s definition of the Companion preserved in Ibn Saʿd’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* precedes Abū Ḥātim’s opinion.<sup>210</sup> Meanwhile, Amr Osman examines of relevant works and prefers the view that the collective probity crystalized in the fifth/eleventh century.<sup>211</sup> He has observed, “the doctrine has become an article of the Sunni faith simply because it was indispensable.”<sup>212</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, ed. Nur al-Dīn ʿItr, (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), 291-301.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 294.

<sup>207</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll discusses this issue in *Muslim Tradition*, 190-206. See also G. H. A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt*, (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 55-99.

<sup>208</sup> Among them are the four madhhabs imams, Yahyā b. Maʿīn, ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Zurʿa, Abū Dāwūd, and Abū Ḥātim. See Muslim, *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, ed. M. Muṣṭafā al-Aʿzami, (Riyadh: Wizāra al-Maʿārif al-Suʿūdiyya, 1982), 41.

<sup>209</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and The Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 282-285

<sup>210</sup> “Al-Wāqidī states: Whoever saw the Messenger of God and saw his forbearance and submitted and understood the religion and its goodness is a companion of the Prophet, in our opinion, even if it was for just an hour of the day.” See Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and The Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 267.

<sup>211</sup> Amr Osman, “Adalat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine”, in *Arabica* 60 (2013), 272.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 302.

Muḥammad b. al-Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in his famous work *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* dedicates a section to illustrate the biographies of the Prophet's Companions.<sup>213</sup> A quick glance at al-Ṭabarī's work, in the case of the Companions, he mentions their Islamic record or services to the cause of Islam, as well as any detail or anecdote connecting them with the Prophet. The biographies contain physical descriptions, personal traits, and historical events in which the subjects were involved. Occasionally, al-Ṭabarī followed the method of *ṭabaqāt* which arranged in categories of time and place, or tribes regularly. However, al-Sakhāwī who looks from the ḥadīth scholar's perspective touched upon the reliability of sources in *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*. Describing al-Ṭabarī's work, al-Sakhāwī says the following:

The great history includes both reports on the history of the world and the sources from which they derive, but it is limited by the author's purpose, namely, to supply information about history, wars and conquests. Only rarely does [al-Ṭabarī] deal with the question of the reliability of transmitters (*al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*), because his biographical work suffices in this respect (*iktifā'an bi-tārīkhihi fī al-rijāl*). Thus, the information he gives (in the history of Prophets and Kings) about the great religious teachers (*al-A'imma*) is not exhaustive, for his interest lay in conveying clear detailed accounts of wars and conquests, stories of ancient prophets and kings, past nations and bygone generations. He adduced [all this information] together with its sources and many chain of transmission; he was erudite in all these and other matters.<sup>214</sup>

Before al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Ṣalāḥ gave a similar review of biographical dictionaries of the Companions genre when he says

This is a vast science on which people have written many books. If it had not been for Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's inclusion of a large amount of material concerning the disputes that flared up between the Companions and his relations from the historians, rather than the transmitters of ḥadīth, his *Kitāb al-Istī'āb [fī ma'rifa al-Aṣḥāb]* (Comprehensive Book [of the Acquaintance of Companions]) would have been one of the most pleasant and useful works on the subject. Prolixity and confusion prevail in what the historians relate.<sup>215</sup>

Perhaps this could be a distinction, if not a real fissure that points to the differences of writing style among scholars at that time. In the beginning, for ḥadīth scholars around the early second/eighth or the end of seventh century, excellence of qualities and virtues (*faḍā'il wa manāqib*) of the Companion were a favourite theme in their narrative arts.<sup>216</sup> The works on ḥadīth compilation in their turn devote a special chapter to a theme, such as *faḍā'il Aṣḥāb*

<sup>213</sup> *The History of al-Tabari vol.39: Biographies of the Prophet's Companions and Their Successors*, Ella Landau-Tasseron, (New York: Suny Series in Near Eastern Studies, 1998), xviii.

<sup>214</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *al-I'lān bi al-Tawbīkh li-man Dhamm Ahl al-Tārīkh*, 286; Rosenthal, *History*, 488; Ella-Landau Tasseron has translated this text.

<sup>215</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 292.

<sup>216</sup> M. Muranyi, *Ṣaḥāba in The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs and G. Lecomte, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 8/828.

*al-Nabī* and *manāqib al-anṣār*.<sup>217</sup> As suggested by Asma Afsaruddin, a survey of this kind literature shows that the terms *manāqib* and *faḍā'il* could be used fairly interchangeably.<sup>218</sup>

Subsequently, the virtue of notable persons like Caliph Rashidun and other companions constitute a sub-section of most ḥadīth collections. For example, al-Bukhārī lists Abū Bakr's virtues as him being "chosen to be dearest friend of the Prophet if allowed for the Prophet," "the only Companion to accompany the Prophet in *hijra*."<sup>219</sup> The occurrence of Abū Bakr's relationship with the Prophet therefore displays his preferred status. Similar to those works the status of Companions further establishes in larger context when the composition of biographical dictionaries on Companions or *Kutub al-Ṣaḥāba* materialized. As mentioned earlier, ḥadīth scholars gathered the information regarding Companions along with the reliability of the transmitters of their selection. However, most of the works do not exist in manuscript form, as it only attributed later by scholars who engaged in the science of ḥadīth transmission. There are at least 21 known biographical dictionaries of Companions, according to al-'Umarī, al-Zahrānī and Ḥafṣī's lists.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>217</sup> Rudolf Sellheim, "Faḍila" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*, ed. B. Lewis, CH. Pellat, and J. Schacht, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 2/728.

<sup>218</sup> Asma Afsaruddin, "In Praise of the Caliphs: Re-Creating History from the *Manāqib* Literature", in *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 31 (1999), 329-350; The *manāqib* and *faḍā'il* literatures either were composed of selected group of Companions or individually such as: 1. *Faḍā'il al-Anṣār* of Wahb b. Wahb (d. 200/815), (Rudolf Sellheim, *Faḍila*, 728); 2. *Faḍā'il Quraysh wa al-Anṣār* of al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), (Rudolf Sellheim, *Faḍila*, 728); 3. *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, (Edited and printed in Aḥmad b. Hanbal, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Wasiy Allāh b. Muḥammad 'Abbas, (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1983); 4. *Manāqib al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn* of Abū Qutayba (d. 272/885), (In manuscript form at Khazana al-Turath, Maktaba Hyderabad, India. (57/939)); 5. *Faḍā'il 'Uthmān* of 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 290/902), ('Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il 'Uthmān*, ed. Tal'at al-Halwani, (Jeddah: Dār Majid 'Usairi, 2000)); 6. *Manāqib 'Uthmān b. 'Affān* of Khaythama b. Sulaymān al-Aṭarābulī (d. 343/954), (Muḥib al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭabarī, *Al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍra fī Manāqib al-'Ashara*, ed. 'Isa b. 'Abd Allah, (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996), 138); 7. *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* of al-Nasā'ī, (The name is *Khaṣā'is 'Alī*, part of his Sunan); 8. *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* of al-Ṭabarī. However, he did not complete it as mentioned by al-Dāwūdī in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1983) 2/117.

<sup>219</sup> Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1999), 613-618.

<sup>220</sup> *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū 'Ubayda Ma'mar b. al-Muthannā (d. 208/823). (Mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 6/186. Al-Sakhāwī, al-I'lān bi al-Tawbīkh, 93. See *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 64. Introduction of *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba li Abī Nu'aym*, 1/64); 2. *Ma'rifa man Nazala min al-Ṣaḥāba Sā'ir al-Buldān*, 'Alī b. al-Maḍīnī (d. 234/848), (Al-Hakim, *Ma'rifa 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, p.71. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī said it was in 5 volumes in *al-Jāmi'* 1/302); 3. *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba*, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, (Aḥmad b. Hanbal, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Wasiy Allāh b. Muḥammad 'Abbas, (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1983)); 4. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr al-Dimashqī (d. 245/859), (Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 2/119); 5. *Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, (Ibn Hajar, Introduction of *al-Iṣāba*, 1/3); 6. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Zur'a 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Rāzī (d. 264/877), (Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 2/156); 7. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Aḥmad b. Sayyār al-Marwazī (d. 268/881), (Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 1/148); 8. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm (d. 270/883), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/570); 9. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Rāzī (d. 277/890), (Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 1/156); 10. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 297/909), (Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba*, 1/3. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 11. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Mansur Muḥammad b. Sa'd al-Bāwardī (d. 301/913), (Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 12/271. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75);

### 1.3.3 Biographical Dictionaries on *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* (Impugning and Approving)

This branch of ḥadīth biographical dictionaries is concerned mainly in the degree of accuracy of a particular transmitter. According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, the word *naqd*<sup>221</sup> is used for criticism by some early ḥadīth scholars in the second/eight century.<sup>222</sup> While in third/ninth century, Muslim uses the word *yamīz* for the purpose of ḥadīth criticism.<sup>223</sup> His book *al-Tamyīz* designed for a more general audience and along with *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* introduction, present distinctive data about his criticism methodology.<sup>224</sup>

However, this kind of criticism is widely known as *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* and Ibn Abī Ḥātim could be the first to give a book title using this term. The noun is spelt *al-jarḥ* as well as *al-jurḥ*. For this reason, the plural of this word comes in three forms: *ajraḥ*, *juruḥ*, and *jiraḥ*.<sup>225</sup> One may say *jaraḥahu* (he injured him) *yajraḥuhu* (he is injuring him) *jarḥan* (an injury); its meaning is to injure someone with a weapon. Thus, it can be understood as a condemnation of a transmitter relating his reliability. To the contrary, *al-ta'dīl* is derived from *al-'adl* which means justice. It is said, *'adala 'alayhi* (he did him justice) in this matter so he is *'adil* (just), and *raḥulun 'adlun* (a just man), meaning a transmitter whose testimony is correct with with and trustworthy.<sup>226</sup>

Taking up Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/975)'s introduction in *al-Kāmil fī Du'afā' al-Rijāl*, Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī presents a general compendium of the development of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* from

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12. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Ahwāzī (d. 306/918), (Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba*, 3/1. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 13. *Al-Āḥad*, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Jarud (d. 307/919), (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, 1/46. Ibn Akḥīr al-Ishbīlī, *Fihriṣ*, 215); 14. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/928), (Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba*, 1/3. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 15. *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Azīz al-Baghawī (d. 317/929), (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, 1/47. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 16. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Mūsā al-'Uqaylī (d. 322/933), (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb*, 1/47); 17. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Daghwalī (d. 325/936), (Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 18. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, al-Qāḍī Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-'Asal (d. 349/960), (Abu Nu'aym, *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2/128. Ibn Kathīr, *Jāmi' al-Masānid*, 2/218); 19. *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Bāqī b. Qānī al-Umawī (d. 351/962), (Al-Mubarakfurī, introduction of *Tuhfa al-Ahwadhī*, 166. Akram Diyā' Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 70); 20. *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū 'Alī Sa'īd b. 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd b. al-Sakan al-Baghdādī al-Misrī (d. 353/964), (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 1/46. Ibn Hajar, *al-Iṣāba*, 1/3. Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/75); 21. *Al-Ṣaḥāba*, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Hibbān.

<sup>221</sup> Among the meaning as Ibn Manẓūr said *al-naqd* or *al-tanqad* is the differentiation of *dirhams* (silver coins) and to extract the counterfeit coins from them. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 3/425.

<sup>222</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, 9 vols. ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥya al-Mu'allimī, (Hyderabad: Da'ira al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyya, 1952), 232.

<sup>223</sup> Sometimes they would say, *tamyīz al-ruwa* (distinction of the transmitters).

<sup>224</sup> Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonisation of al-Bukhari and Muslim*, 82.

<sup>225</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2/422-423.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

its beginning down to the mid-fourth century of *hijra*.<sup>227</sup> Ibn ‘Adī states it began with Companions like Ibn ‘Abbās, Ubāda b. Šāmit, and Anas who criticised and assessed the transmitter. Successors such as al-Sha‘bī, Ibn Sīrīn and Sa‘īd b. al-Mūsaiyyab continued the tradition. After describing his seventy-three-man list of ḥadīth critics, he concluded

I have mentioned the names of those scholars among the Companions, Successors, and the following men, generation by generation to our day, who, in their own right, are allowed to give opinions concerning [ḥadīth] transmitters or who assert themselves to be qualified to do this and who memorize the [name of the] reliable and unreliable transmitters.<sup>228</sup>

In the opinion of A‘zami, the investigation of transmitters began to involve basic principles during the lifetime of the Prophet.<sup>229</sup> For example, Ḍimām b. Tha‘labah came to the Prophet and said, “Muḥammad, your messenger came to us and told us your assertion that verily Allāh had sent you [as a prophet]. The Prophet remarked: He told the truth.”<sup>230</sup> Abū Bakr the first caliph is considered as the pioneer of this field.<sup>231</sup> ‘Umar, ‘Alī ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr, Ubay b. Ka‘ab, Anas b. Mālik and other of prominent Companions also have carried out this sort of investigation. As maintained by Ibn Ḥibbān, the Successors like Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab (d. 93/711), al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abi Bakr (d. 106/724), Sālim b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (d. 106/724), ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (d. 93/711), Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/712), ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Utbah (d. 98/716), Khārijah b. Zayd b. Thābit (d. 100/718), ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. d. 94/712), Abū Bakr b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/712), and Sulaymān b. Yasār (d. 104/722) continued to contribute to the development of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*.<sup>232</sup>

However, the investigation of transmitters only become common during the next generation since the transmitter of doubtful veracity grew in number, and so the evaluation of transmitters grew in importance. Most scholars agree that an enormous amount of forgeries was included in the ḥadīth literature and according to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, ḥadīth and

<sup>227</sup> Ṭāhir b. Šāliḥ b. Aḥmad al-Jazāirī al-Dimashqī, *Tawjīh al-Nazar ilā Uṣūl al-Āthār*, (Egypt: Maṭba‘a al-Jamaliyya, 1910), 114.

<sup>228</sup> This text has been translated by Scott C. Lucas. See also Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil fī Ḍu‘afā’ al-Rijāl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 1/147.

<sup>229</sup> M. Muṣṭafā al-A‘zami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 65.

<sup>230</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, (Lahore, Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf Publishers, 1993), 1/7. A‘zami suggests to read with ḥadīth no. 63 in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, trans. Muḥammad Muhsin Khan, (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1979), 1/55. After the conversation, Ḍimām declared, “I have believed in all that with you have been sent, and I have been sent by my people as a messenger, and I am Ḍimām b. Tha‘laba from the brothers of Banī Sa‘d b. Bakr.”

<sup>231</sup> M. Muṣṭafā al-A‘zami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 66.

<sup>232</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, ed. Ḥamdī b. ‘Abd al-Majīd b. Ismā‘īl (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumay‘ī, 2000), 1/39-40.

tafsīr were more affected by forgery than any other branch of literature.<sup>233</sup> The Glaswegian William Muir thought that forgery in ḥadīth began during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān.<sup>234</sup> However, Siddiqi argues it was more likely to have occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet himself.<sup>235</sup> Hashim Kamali in *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* discusses briefly the historical origins of forgery in ḥadīth.<sup>236</sup>

Hence, in the course of the second/eight century realizing that there were many forged aḥādīth, the interest in the transmitters developed for evaluating their qualities.<sup>237</sup> The science of ḥadīth transmission evolved in parallel with the development of strategies for collecting and classifying ḥadīth. The focus of ḥadīth criticism was the *isnād* and the individuals named in it. Biographical notices were compiled from ḥadīth collections, and they were presented as such, with full chains of transmitters or *isnād*.<sup>238</sup> With the passage of time, biographers came to rely more on written evidence, but this was still be combined with information obtained orally.<sup>239</sup>

By the turn of the second to third century of *hijra* ḥadīth scholars who collected aḥādīth were concerned not only with the soundness of the chain of the transmission, but also with the reputations of the individual’s transmitters. A‘zami added that before scholars found out the degree of accuracy of a particular transmitter, they practised a method of comparison, including

# 1. Comparison between the aḥādīth of the different students of a particular scholar.

<sup>233</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 31.

<sup>234</sup> He quoted ‘Uthman commanding, “It is not permitted to anyone to relate a tradition as from the Prophet, which he hath not already heard in the time of Abu Bekr or Omar. And verily nothing hinders me from repeating traditions of the Prophet’s sayings (although I be one of those endowed with the most retentive memory amongst all his Companions) but that I have heard him say, *whoever shall repeat of me that which I have not said, his resting-place shall be in Hell*”. See Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1894), xxxiii.

<sup>235</sup> Ibn Ḥazm in *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* wrote, “After the *hijra*, he tells us, a man went to an outlying district of Medina and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him authority over them. He resorted to this device because he was of a mind to marry a girl who was a member of that tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the *hijra*, but who had not consented. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet to make enquiries concerning the ‘authority’ thus asserted in his name. The Prophet told them that the man was a pretender, and had received no warrant for what he did. See Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 32.

<sup>236</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 87-92. See also Muḥammad ‘Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb, *al-Sunna Qabl al-Tadwīn*, 185-292.

<sup>237</sup> Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Ḥadīth*, 80.

<sup>238</sup> M. J. L. Young, “Arabic Biographical Writing,” in *the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Religion, Learning and Science in the ‘Abbasid Period*, ed. M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham and R. B. Serjeant (Cambridge, 1990), 168-87.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

2. Comparison between the statements of a particular scholar at different times.
3. Comparison between oral recitation and written documents.
4. Comparison between the ḥadīth and the related text of the Qur'an.<sup>240</sup>

He gives further examples to illustrate the methods.<sup>241</sup> Agreeing with the legal theorist viewpoint, Daniel Brown states that the rules for evaluating the trustworthiness of a transmitter were borrowed the procedures and technical vocabulary used to test witnesses in legal cases.<sup>242</sup>

Meanwhile Eerik Dickinson in the *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism* focuses on Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Taqdima* that was meant to serve as an introduction to *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, one of the Ibn Abī Ḥātim's biographical dictionaries. Ibn Abī Ḥātim justifies the employment of ḥadīth criticism which began early and was used continuously up to his own day.<sup>243</sup> He applies the *ṭabaqāt* presentations to determine the case that these early scholars were critics of ḥadīth. In *Taqdima*, the critics were categorized into four *ṭabaqāt*.<sup>244</sup> In conjunction with Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Dickinson also highlights the

<sup>240</sup> M. Muṣṭafā al-A'zami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, 70.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 70-77.

<sup>242</sup> Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.

<sup>243</sup> Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abi Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 41.

<sup>244</sup> The First *Ṭabaqa*:

Madinah	- Mālik b. Anas (d.179/795)
Makkah	- Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 196/811)
Kufa	- Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778)
Basra	- Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d.160/776)
	- Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795)
Damascus	- al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/774)

The Second *Ṭabaqa*:

Kufa	- Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812)
Basra	- Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/812)
	- 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī (d. 198/813)
Marv	- 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797)
Damascus	- Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī (d. 188/804)
	- Abū Mushir (d. 218/833)

The Third *Ṭabaqa*:

Baghdad	- Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855)
	- Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn (d. 233/847)
Basra	- 'Alī b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849)
Kufa	- Ibn Numayr (d. 234/848)

The Fourth *Ṭabaqa*:

general principles and methods of the ḥadīth critics of Ibn Abi Ḥātim's era. Nevertheless, he called into question Mālik b. Anas and Sufyān al-Thawrī generation of the second/eight century as 'not ḥadīth critics'.<sup>245</sup> In his conclusion, he says

Consultation of later biographies shows that figures like Mālik and Sufyān al-Thawrī bore easily the mantle of the critic. Both the critics and their rivals agreed on this point, but for entirely different reasons.<sup>246</sup>

He summarises by stating that "nowhere does Ibn Abi Ḥātim explicitly delineate the criteria he employed in selecting the scholars for the *Taqdima*."<sup>247</sup> Lucas, meanwhile, deliberately responds to Dickinson's opinion. He argues, "Ibn Abi Ḥātim cast the first generation of scholars as ḥadīth critics in order to give the discipline of ḥadīth criticism a greater veneer of authenticity and historical depth."<sup>248</sup> In his monograph, Lucas selects 120/738 as a cut-off death date and classifies second/eight century as the first phase of ḥadīth critics of the nascent Sunni tradition.<sup>249</sup> The second phase extends from 200/815 to 300/912 and the final phase from 300/912 to 400/1009. Apart from al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, Lucas scrutinizes an additional nine sources to yield a group of ḥadīth critics who lived in three century-long periods. The sources include seven lists<sup>250</sup> and three *ṭabaqāt* presentations.<sup>251</sup> Ninety-two names generated by these sources are arranged into three phases as mentioned above and a tripartite hierarchy namely primary, secondary and 'other'.

In general, most third/ninth and fourth/tenth century biographical dictionaries on ḥadīth transmitter criticism commence with introductions discussing both technical and polemical aspects. Within the introduction one finds the reason for the compilation, conditions for listing as approval or impugning transmitter, the scope biography itself, and justifications of ḥadīth criticism aimed at the attacks of the *ahl al-ra'y* and *ahl al-kalām*.<sup>252</sup> Although most of the judgement of early critics is scattered, it is argued that substantial fragments are preserved in the form of quotations with *isnād* in later works. As stated by Mehmet Akif, it is quite usual to look the evaluation of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* reports in

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Ray                      - Abū Zur'a (d. 264/878)  
                               - Abū Ḥātim (d. 277/890).

<sup>245</sup> Erik Dickinson, *Taqdima Abi Ḥātim*, 127-128.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>248</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Hadith Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 119.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>250</sup> A lists by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjaj, al-Ḥākim al-Naysaburī, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), and al-Dhahabī.

<sup>251</sup> *Ṭabaqāt* presentations by Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn 'Adī.

<sup>252</sup> Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, 14.



general, because it is subjective in nature, and hence they do not yield any consensus that can be measured in statistical terms.<sup>253</sup> In addition, Tarif Khalidi asserts the personal inclinations of the ḥadīth critics was a very important factor in determining their critical method, and thus there is a glaring lack of uniformity in viewpoints in this regard.<sup>254</sup>

When books on the science of ḥadīth transmission were written, in fourth/tenth century onwards, the broad designation includes all of the various disciplines of the study of ḥadīth. Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) presents a brief history of this sub-genre in the introduction of *Nuzha al-Nazar*, his commentary on his own *Nukhba al-Fikar*.<sup>255</sup> Consequently, *al-Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl* formed a recognized branch of the subject.<sup>256</sup> In this discipline, a list of rules and criteria was drawn up. It suffices for our purpose here to summarize Ibn Ḥajar's classification of transmitters into twelve grades which has been widely accepted by the later ḥadīth scholars:

1. The Companions, [who are accepted as transmitters on the authority of the Qur'an's praising their qualities as believers].<sup>257</sup>
2. The transmitters who have been consistently described as *awthaq al-nās* (the most reliable of people) or *thiqa thiqa* (reliable reliable) or with terms meaning *thiqa ḥāfiẓ* (reliable expert).
3. The transmitters who have been described at least once with words of high praise like *thiqa* or *mutqin* (accurate) or *thabt* (firm) or *'adl* (just).
4. The transmitters whose quality is marginally less than no. 3, described as *ṣadūq* (very truthful) or *la ba'sa bihi* (no harm in [taking from] him).

<sup>253</sup> Mehmet Akif, "Isnāds and Rijāl Expertise in the Exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (327/939)," in *Der Islam Bd.* 82. (Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 156.

<sup>254</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Islamic Biographical Dictionaries", 59.

<sup>255</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Nuzha al-Nazar*, ed. 'Abd Allāh b. Dayf Allāh al-Ruḥaylī, (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Malik Fahd, 2001), 31.

<sup>256</sup> Akram Diyā' al-'Umārī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 96. See also James Robson, "(Al-)Djarh wa'l Ta'dīl", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2/462.

<sup>257</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, ed. Abū al-Ashbal Saghīr Aḥmad Shaghīf al-Bakistānī, (Riyadh: Dār al-Āṣima, 1421H), 80. Akram Nadwi has translated this text. See Akram Nadwi, *al-Muhaddithat*, 232.

5. The transmitters whose quality is marginally less than no. 4, described as *ṣadūq sayyi' al-ḥifẓ* (very truthful with sound memory), *ṣadūq yahim* (very truthful but committing mistake sometimes) and etc.
6. The transmitters who transmit few aḥādīth, and no reason is known for turning away from those aḥādīth, and are described as *maqbul* (accepted).
7. The transmitters from whom more than one person has transmitted, but whose reliability is not explicitly confirmed, described as *mastūr* (hidden), or *majhūl al-ḥāl* (whose condition is unknown).
8. The transmitters whose reliability is not affirmed by one whose affirmation matters, and who have pointed to as *da'if* (weak).
9. The transmitters from whom only one person has transmitted, and whose reliability has not been affirmed at all; described as *majhūl* (unknown).
10. The transmitters whose reliability is not affirmed at all, and about whom something negative is known; described as *matrūk* (left) or *sāqit* (fallen) or *wāhy al-ḥadīth* (weak in ḥadīth).
11. Transmitters who have been accused of lying.
12. Transmitters about whom lying or fabricating is established, [either by their confession or otherwise].<sup>258</sup>

These classifications were mostly adopted by later scholars and for every rank there are many terms that have been used by different scholars. However, there are a few discrepancies of meaning in the terms applied by some of the early scholars.<sup>259</sup> In Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *al-Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl*, Ibn Ḥibbān's *al-Du'afā' wa al-Matrūkīn*, Ibn 'Adī's *al-Kāmil fī Du'afā' al-Rijāl*, and others, they discuss the various classes of transmitters with their own terms, and their classification served as a standard for the next generation of authors; e.g., al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his *al-Kifāya*, Ibn Ṣalāḥ, and until nowadays.

<sup>258</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, 80.

<sup>259</sup> M. Muṣṭafā al-A'zami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, 81.

Concerning the principles of selection on which the biographical dictionaries on approving and impugning transmitters are compiled, three groups may be distinguished. There are many early works that laid the foundations of a methodology of evaluation combining approved and impugned transmitters.<sup>260</sup> Meanwhile, gargantuan biographical dictionaries were dedicated to listing and discussing only impugned transmitters.<sup>261</sup> Finally,

<sup>260</sup> 1. *al-Tārīkh* of Yahyā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Bukayr (d. 231/845), (Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 11/238); 2. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 233/847), (*Yahya b. Ma‘īn wa Kitābuhu al-Tārīkh*, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Nur Sayf, (Jeddah: King ‘Abd al-Aziz University, 1979), 1/61); 3. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 285); 4. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Aḥmad Maḥmūd b. Ghilān al-Marwazī (d. 239/853), (Al-Khalīlī, *al-Irshād*, 185); 5. *al-Tārīkh* of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, (Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, (Baghdad: Maṭba‘a al-‘Ānī, 1967)); 6. *al-‘Ilal wa Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl* of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *‘Ilal wa Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*, ed. Waṣīy Allāh b. Muḥammad ‘Abbas, (Riyadh: Dār al-Khānī, 2002)); 7. *‘Ilal al-Hadīth wa Ma‘rifat al-Shuyūkh* of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ammār al-Mawṣilī (d. 242/856), (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 5/417); 8. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Amr b. ‘Alī al-Fallās (d. 249/863), (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 2/232); 9. *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī; 10. *al-Tārīkh* of al-Mufaḍḍal b. Ghassān al-Ghilābī (d. 256/869), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islam*, 1/68); 11. *al-Tārīkh* of Ḥanbal b. Ishāq b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī (d. 273/886), (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 8/286); 12. *al-Tārīkh* of Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Mājah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273/886), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/636); 13. *al-Ma‘rifat wa al-Tārīkh* of Ya‘qub b. Sufyān al-Fasawī (d. 277/890), (Ya‘qub b. Sufyān al-Fasawī, *al-Ma‘rifat wa al-Tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, (Madinah: Maktaba al-Dār, 1410H)); 14. *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama (d. 279/892), (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 4/163); 15. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī, (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 289); 16. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Zur‘a ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Amr al-Naṣrī al-Dimashqī (d. 281/894), (Abū Zur‘a ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Amr al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh Abī Zur‘a*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1996)); 17. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muslim al-Abār (d. 290/902), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/639); 18. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Uthmān b. Abī Shayba (d. 297/909), (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 3/42); 19. *al-Tārīkh* of al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 301/913), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/695); 20. *al-Tamīz* of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Naṣā‘ī, (Al-Sakhawī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/353); 21. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Sirāj al-Thaqafī (d. 313/925), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/371); 22. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū al-‘Arab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Taym al-Afrīqī (d. 333/944), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 3/890); 23. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-‘Assāl (d. 349/960), (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 16/11); 24. *al-Tārīkh* of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. Uthmān b. Shāhīn al-Wa‘iz (d. 385/995), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 3/988).

<sup>261</sup> 1. *al-Du‘afā’* of Yahyā b. Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813), (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 9/183); 2. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 233/847), (Al-Sakhawī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 4/352); 3. *al-Du‘afā’* of ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Maḍīnī (d. 234/848), (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 286); 4. *al-Du‘afā’* of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Sa‘īd al-Burqī (d. 249/863), (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 13/46); 5. *al-Du‘afā’ al-Ṣaghīr*<sup>261</sup> of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, (Al-Bukhārī, *al-Du‘afā’ al-Ṣaghīr*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid, (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1986)); 6. *Aḥwal al-Rijāl* of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Ya‘qub al-Jawzajānī (d. 259/872), (Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Ya‘qub al-Jawzajānī, *Aḥwal al-Rijāl*, ed. al-Sayyid Ṣubḥī al-Badrī, (Beirut: Mu‘assasa al-Risāla); 7. *al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkūn* of Abū Zur‘a ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Rāzī (d. 264/877), (Abū Zur‘a ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Rāzī, *al-Du‘afā’ wa Ajwiba Abī Zur‘a al-Rāzī ‘alā Su‘ālāt al-Bardha‘ī*, ed. Sa‘īd al-Hāshimī, (Madinah: Islamic University, 1982); 8. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Ḥatīm Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Rāzī (d. 277/890), (Al-Dhahabī, *Al-Mughni fī al-Du‘afa’*, ed. Nur al-Dīn ‘Itr, (Qatar: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth), 1/35); 9. *al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkūn* of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Naṣā‘ī, (Al-Naṣā‘ī, *al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkūn*, ed. Markaz al-Khidmāt wa al-Abḥāth al-Thaqāfiyya, (Beirut: Mu‘assasa al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1985)); 10. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Jārūd (d. 307/919), (Al-Dhahabī, *Lisan al-Mizan*, 1/34); 11. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Yahyā Zakariyyā b. Yahyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sājī (d. 307/919), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 2/709); 12. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma (d. 311/923), (Al-Dhahabī, *Al-Mughni fī al-Du‘afa’*, 1/35); 13. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Bishr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dūlābī (d. 310/922), (Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, *Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna*, 92); 14. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Amr al-‘Uqaylī (d. 322/933), (Abū Ja‘far

some focuses respectively on discussing transmitters whom the biographer felt were reliable. Among the well-known include those *al-Thiqāt wa al-Muthabbbitun* of ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Madīnī,<sup>262</sup> *al-Thiqāt* of Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ijlī (d. 261/874),<sup>263</sup> *al-Thiqāt* of Abū al-‘Arab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Tamīm al-Tamīmī al-Afrīqī,<sup>264</sup> *al-Thiqāt* of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Bashrān b. Muḥammad al-Sukarī (d. 367/977), *Tārīkh Asmā’ al-Thiqāt* of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. Shāhīn al-Wa‘iz (d. 385/995).<sup>265</sup>

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Muḥammad b. ‘Amr al-‘Uqaylī, *al-Du‘afā’*, ed. Ḥamdī b. ‘Abd al-Majīd b. Ismā‘īl, (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumay‘ī, 2000)); 15. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū Nu‘aym ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. ‘Adī al-Jurjānī (d. 333/944), (Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira al-Huffāz*, 3/817); 16. *al-Du‘afā’* of Abū al-‘Arab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Tamīm al-Afrīqī, (Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 2/152); 17. *Al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn* of Abū ‘Alī Sa‘īd b. ‘Uthmān b. al-Sakan (d. 353/964), (Al-Sakhawī, *Fath al-Mughhith*, 4/352).

<sup>262</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 71.

<sup>263</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifat al-Thiqāt*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Bastawī, (Madinah: Maktaba al-Dār, 1985).

<sup>264</sup> Al-Sakhawī, *Fath al-Mughhith*, 4/352.

<sup>265</sup> Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. Shāhīn, *Tārīkh Asmā’ al-Thiqāt*, ed. Ṣubḥī al-Ssamirā’ī, (Kuwait: Dār al-Salafiyya, 1984).

## CHAPTER TWO

### IBN ḤIBBĀN: HIS LIFE AND CAREER

This second chapter introduces Ibn Ḥibbān from his early life when he began a journey to seek knowledge, building a scholarly career until the end of his life. Very brief reference to Ibn Ḥibbān appears in many histories, chronological, and biographical dictionaries; however, his biography is treated in a general form and not much is known about his early life. The works such as *al-Ansāb* by al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), *Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1175), *Muʿjam al-Buldān* by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1228), *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān* by Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* and *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ* by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi Tartīb Ibn Balabān* by Ibn Balabān (d. 1083/1672), reported Ibn Ḥibbān's biography repetitiously.

Ibn Ḥibbān also appears in Brockelmann's list of Arabic literary works, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, which was published in 1898 (vol. 1). In the *GAL*, Ibn Ḥibbān is introduced as a ḥadīth scholar and as a judge in Samarkand after extensive travels.<sup>266</sup> Then Brockelmann quoted from Goldziher's *Maʿānī al-Nafs* the criticism towards Ibn Ḥibbān on the issue of prophethood as we will see in this chapter. Meanwhile, Sezgin under the chapter of Ḥadīth in *Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums* described him as one of the important ḥadīth scholars in his time. From the entry of Ibn Ḥibbān, we can see Sezgin list ten works of Ibn Ḥibbān's manuscripts.<sup>267</sup>

#### 2.1 Early Life

The *kunya* (paidonymics) by which Ibn Ḥibbān is known is 'a son of Ḥibbān' as his father was named Ḥibbān. We do not find any information about his other *kunya* 'Abū Ḥātim' or 'a father of Ḥātim'.<sup>268</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān's full name is Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad b. Muʿadh b. Maʿbad b. Saʿīd b. Saḥīd b. Maʿbad b. Hudayh b. Murrah b. Saʿd b. Yazīd b. Murrah b. Zayd b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Dārim b. Mālik b. Ḥanzala b. Mālik b. Zayd Manā b. Tamīm b. Murr

<sup>266</sup> Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 1/273

<sup>267</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums*, 1/189.

<sup>268</sup> *Al-Ansāb*. 2/208; *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, 1/415; *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, 7/291; *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* 3/920; *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ* 16/92; *Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, 176.

b. Udd b. Ṭābikha b. Ilyās b. Muḍar b. Nizar b. Ma'd b. 'Adnān.<sup>269</sup> He shares a common ancestor with Prophet Muḥammad when it reaches at Ilyas b. Muḍar b. Nizar.<sup>270</sup>

According to Yāqūt, this genealogy clearly shows that Ibn Ḥibbān comes from a famous Arab tribe called al-Tamīmī, which originally inhabited the Arab Peninsula in Pre-Islamic times. Tamīm who is the eponymous ancestor of this tribe is a direct descendant of 'Adnān. This tribe of al-Tamīmī was subdivided by the three sons of Tamīm, namely Zayd Manā, 'Amr and Hārith. The leading group of the subdivision of Mālik b. Zayd Manā was the Ḥanzala b. Mālik, among whom the Dārim b. Mālik, or rather the 'Abd Allāh b. Dārim was the dominant group of the whole tribe of Tamīm.<sup>271</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān's ancestor could have occupied close to the region of Bahrain as mentioned by Yāqūt.<sup>272</sup> His tribe, the tribe of 'Abd Allāh b. Dārim has been known to reside in the town of Kufa and its district, possibly close to the Euphrates.<sup>273</sup> It is unclear exactly when Ibn Ḥibbān's ancestor moved to Bust<sup>274</sup> (Pliny the Elder called it Parabesten,<sup>275</sup> Bist or Bust in Isidore of Charax),<sup>276</sup> an ancient town<sup>277</sup> in the region of al-Rukhkhāj, and a main station on the trade route between Baghdad and India. It is possible, though, that Ibn

<sup>269</sup> *Al-Ansāb*, 2/208; *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 1/415; *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, 7/291; *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* 3/920; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 16/92; *Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-A'yān*, 176.

<sup>270</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muṭallib b. Hāshim b. 'Abd Manāf b. Quṣay b. Kilāb b. Murra b. Ka'b b. Lu'ay b. Ghālīb b. Fihr b. Mālik b. Al-Naẓr b. Kināna b. Khuzayma b. Mudrika b. Ilyās b. Muḍar b. Nizār b. Ma'd b. Adnān. See Al-Qalqashandī, *Nihāyat al-'Arab fī Ma'rifa Ansāb al-'Arab*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1980), 23.

<sup>271</sup> *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 12/4993; *Nihāyat al-'Arab*, 249; *Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab al-Qadīma wa al-Hadītha*, 2/731. See also Amal Elesha marogī, "Zayd, 'Amr and 'Abdullāhi: Theory of Proper Names and Reference in Early Arabic Grammar Tradition," in *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics: Sibawayh and Early Arabic*, ed. Amal Elesha Marogī, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 133.

<sup>272</sup> On Banu Darim under the region of Bayḍa, see *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 1/532; *Nihāyat al-'Arab*, 249.

<sup>273</sup> See Mohsen Zakeri, *Sasanid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of 'Ayyārān and Futuwwa*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 307. See also Najm Haider, *The Origins of the Shi'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eight-Century Kufah*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 241.

<sup>274</sup> Bust, or Bost, the 'settlement of twenty forts', situated to the east of Sistān and close to the site of present-day Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan. In classical times this whole region had formed the province of Arachosia, the Avestan Harakhvaiti, whose name survived into Islamic times for the district of Rukhud or Rukhudh/Rukhwadh. Arabic historians like al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Mas'ūdī called it al-Rukhkhāj. Bust was the main town of these eastern dominions of the early Saffarids. Some authorities like the early fourth/tenth century geographer Abū Zayd al-Balkhī considered Bust was the centre of one of the administrative and fiscal districts of early Islamic Sistān and its dependencies. Whilst others considered as a separate *kurah* (province) or administrative and fiscal unit. See Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz*, (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persia, 1994,) 57-58.

<sup>275</sup> Pliny, *Natural History* in Ten Volumes, with an English Translation by H. Rackham, (Harvard University Press, 1989), vol. II, 409. See also Trevor Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of the Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 527.

<sup>276</sup> C. E. Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz*, 59.

<sup>277</sup> Yāqūt used here of the simple term *madīnah* (the proper town) when he describes Bust. A town located between Sijistān, Ghaznī and Herat. See *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 3/190.

Ḥibbān's ancestor moved to Bust after the decline of the Sassanian Empire.<sup>278</sup> Beyond this not much we had known about his parents' lineage. Accordingly, all sources agree he was born in Bust and grew up there.<sup>279</sup> However, the report on Ibn Ḥibbān date of birth is uncertain and al-Dhahabī guessed it was around 270/883.<sup>280</sup>

Apart from his famous *nisba* (toponymic surname) al-Bustī, derived from his birthplace, Ibn Ḥibbān is commonly known by the *nisba* al-Tamīmī and al-Sijistānī. Al-Sijistānī called by the Arabs refers to Sijistān or Sistān,<sup>281</sup> is ancient Sakastane, named for Indo-Iranian Sakas, who migrated there in second century B.C. from the area of Bactria and the Upper Oxus. Sistān was also called Nīmruz in Persian, a region of the Afghan-Iran borderland.<sup>282</sup> This region came under the rule of Islam during the reign of Caliph Umar al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644).<sup>283</sup> Speaking specifically about this land, Yāqūt said that Bust, "a fertile, commercially prosperous as well as enjoyed a vigorous intellectual life and scholarship." And so Ibn Ḥibbān began to collect ḥadīth from a judge of his hometown, Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl al-Qāḍī al-Bustī.<sup>284</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān narrated 69 ḥadīth from Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'īl in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, who

<sup>278</sup> *Al-Qabā'il al-'Arabiyyah fī al-Sharq*, 187.

<sup>279</sup> *Al-Ansāb*, 2/208; *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 1/415; *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*; *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* 3/920; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 16/92; *Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-A'yān* 176; *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* 7/291; *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya*, 3/133.

<sup>280</sup> *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, 16/92.

<sup>281</sup> "Sistān", Middle Persian Sakastan "land of the Sakas", the Arabs wrote Sijistān, a more recent name in history than Drangiana, the term which subsequently appears in the Greek text. On the province of Sistān (Sijistān), see *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 3/190; C. E. Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz*, 30; Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in The Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle*, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 3.

<sup>282</sup> According to the anonymous *Tārīkh-e Sistān* (History of Sistān), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), one of the most important figures in early Islam played a large role in laying down the foundations of Islam in the region of Sistān. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was born in 21/642 in Madīnah. He joined military expeditions to the east which led to the conquest of Eastern Iran. He was the teacher, architect of the *mihrab* and pulpit of the Friday mosque in Zarang/Zaranj, a city in south west Afghanistan, near border with Iran nowadays. This mosque was built by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Samurah, the governor of Sistān between 41/661 and 46/666. See Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 19-23; Guy Le Strange, *The Land of the Eastern Caliphate*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 335.

<sup>283</sup> When the Persian defeat at Qādisiyya in 14/636, the conquest of Sistān continued by Rabī' b. Ziyād in 30/650. After several furious battles, with heavy casualties on both sides, the Sistānis were forced to retreat into the city. The Sistānis sent an envoy to tell Rabī' that their books had predicted the coming of the Arabs and Islam and that 'that *dawlah* would long endure'; Rabī' responded that he preferred peace to war. Elsewhere in Sistān, Rabī' met with resistance, many Sistānis were killed; others were taken prisoner and sent to the caliphal court, where 'they become important men', and 'through the blessings of Islam and of learning became princes, found freedom after slavery, and themselves gained many slaves'. But the Sistānis did not remain docile, and in 33/654-5 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Samurah, accompanied by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and a number of important jurisprudence scholars, was sent to subdue the region. See Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 111 and Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *World Religions and Islam: A Critical Study*, (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003), 1/137.

<sup>284</sup> *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 1/415.

lived till the end of third century of Hijrah.<sup>285</sup> In his hometown he also learned from Abū al-Ḥasan, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Junayd (d. 347/958).<sup>286</sup> And from the source of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, we consider his father among the scholars.<sup>287</sup> Apart from this, not much is known of his early career and life during almost of a quarter century in Bust.

## 2.2 Travels and Teachers

In his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* article on Ibn Ḥibbān, J. W. Fuck calls him “the traditionist” as Ibn Ḥibbān was particularly an expert in the ḥadīth scholarship.<sup>288</sup> Basically the tradition of Muslim scholars in Ibn Ḥibbān’s generation began their education by memorizing the Qur’ān from childhood and learnt from their local scholars. Some scholars forbade their children to attend ḥadīth’s “majlis”<sup>289</sup> before they completed the study of the Qur’ān.<sup>290</sup> A cursory look at the major biographical entries on Ibn Ḥibbān reveals a basic, but far from comprehensive list of his teachers. Yāqūt devotes an inordinately large part of his section on the town of Bust in his geographical dictionary to report about Ibn Ḥibbān’s teachers and travels. Ibn Ḥibbān himself declared that he wrote from 2000 teachers.<sup>291</sup> ‘Adab able to name list about 429 teachers met by Ibn Ḥibbān.<sup>292</sup> Subsequently Shu‘ayb listed about 21 teachers from whom Ibn Ḥibbān narrated more than sixty ḥadīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>293</sup> All of these 21 teachers are in the level of masters in the field of ḥadīth. Four-fifths (6287 out of 7491) of the ḥadīth narrations in Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* emanate from them. Hence, the list of teachers from whom Ibn Ḥibbān heard the ḥadīth is the principal evidence for his travels.

As has been mentioned above, Ibn Ḥibbān’s education was similar for ḥadīth scholars of his time in many respects. They would study with local scholars in their hometown and

<sup>285</sup> For reference on al-Qāḍī al-Bustī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/140; *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/16.

<sup>286</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Bulḍān* 3/121.

<sup>287</sup> ‘Adab al-Hamsh, *al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī wa manhajuhu fī al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*, (M.A. dissertation, Umm al-Qura University), 144.

<sup>288</sup> J. W. Fuck, “Ibn Ḥibbān” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition*, ed. B. Lewis, CH. Pellat, and J. Schacht, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965.)

<sup>289</sup> The term *majlis* gives philosophical evidence to this effect. It was used in the first century of Hijra to designate a hall in which the teaching of ḥadīth took place: *kharaja... ilā majlisihi alladhī kāna yumli fīhi al-ḥadīth* (he left for his hall in which he dictated ḥadīth). It was also used to designate the lesson or lecture itself: *lam yuḥaddith illā majlisayn* (he delivered only one or two lessons of ḥadīth). For the teaching of ḥadīth, at least four methods were generally employed; Oral recitation, reading from books by the teacher, question and answer, and dictation. See Mustafa A’zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 188; George Makdisi, *The Rise of College: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981.), 10.

<sup>290</sup> Mustafa A’zami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 184; Eerik Dickinson, *Taqdima Ibn Abī Hātim*, 16.

<sup>291</sup> “*Wala‘allānā qad katabnā ‘an akthar min alḥay shaykh min Isbijāb ilā al-Iskandariyyah*”. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/152.

<sup>292</sup> Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Bakrī Al-Shahrī, *Zawā‘id Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān ‘alā al-Kutub al-Sitta*, (Ph.D. Diss, Umm al-Qura University, 1421H). 11.

<sup>293</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/12-17.



when they grew up they travelled to intellectual centres across the Islamic world to collect ḥadīth or the quest for knowledge.<sup>294</sup> According to Al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥibbān left home to pursue his studies around the year 300/912.<sup>295</sup> 40 years later he returned to his hometown after visiting more than forty cities from Tashkent to Alexandria. Those 40 years filled with learning and steady growth in prestige. We have useful important biographical data attributed to the cities visited by Ibn Ḥibbān. Ibn Balabān, the editor of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* quotes al-Hakim saying (presumably quoting *Tārīkh Naysabūr*), “Ibn Ḥibbān came to Nishapur and learnt with ‘Abd Allāh b. Shīrūyah (d. 305/918). Then he entered Iraq and stayed for a period with Abī Khalīfa al-Qāḍī (d. 305/918) and his peers simultaneously.”<sup>296</sup>

It is most likely that before Ramaḍān 301/914, during which his earliest teacher died, Ibn Ḥibbān visited Baghdad to study ḥadīth with Ibn Nājiya, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad (d. 301/914).<sup>297</sup> At this time, although Baghdad had weakened as the centre of Abbasid power, it was considered the intellectual capital of the Islamic world. This city was significant for the students of ḥadīth as it had been the home of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 233/847), scholars whom Ibn Ḥibbān acknowledged as experts in ḥadīth criticism. Many of their students still taught there and these were the individuals whom Ibn Ḥibbān sought out. Among them are Ḥāmid b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī (d. 309/921), al-Haytham b. Khalaf al-Dūrī (d. 307/919), Aḥmad b. Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Sufī (d. 306/918), ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Baghawī (d. 317/929).

Ibn Ḥibbān later studied with Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb (d. 303/916), known as al-Nasā’ī, one of the compilers of canonical Six Ḥadīth Books/*Kutub al-Sitta*.<sup>298</sup> This trip took him to Egypt ahead of Dhū al-Qā‘idah in 302/915 since al-Nasā’ī only left Egypt after that particular date.<sup>299</sup> Al-Dhahabī reported two versions of al-Nasā’ī end of life, and he gave preference to the story that al-Nasā’ī died in Palestine, Safar 303/914 after he left Egypt. Alexandria in Egypt is the farthest city in the west that Ibn Ḥibbān has reached as he

<sup>294</sup> See Leonard T. Librande, “The Need to Know: Al-Ājurri’s Kitāb Farq Ṭalab al-‘Ilm,” in *Bulletin d’études orientales*, T. 45 (1993), pp. 89-159.

<sup>295</sup> *Mīzan al-‘Itidāl*, 3/506.

<sup>296</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 52/251.

<sup>297</sup> We found at least two Ibn Ḥibbān’s teachers under the name of Ibn Nājiya. Firstly, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Nājiya who died in Baghdad, year 301/914. He is the author of hundred thirty-one volumes of *al-Musnad*. On biography of Ibn Nājiya, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/164. Secondly, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Nājiya al-Harrānī, who Ibn Ḥibbān met in Harran, Turkey. Ibn Ḥibbān said: *Akhbarnahu Ibn Nājiya bi Harran*. See Al-Dāraqutnī, *Ta’liqāt al-Daruqutni ‘alā al-Majruhin Ibn Ḥibbān*, (Makkah: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriya, 1994), 49.

<sup>298</sup> For reference on al-Nasā’ī, see Christopher Melchert, “The Life and Works of al-Nasā’ī,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* LIX/1 Autumn 2014, 377.

<sup>299</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/133.

mentioned in *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā'*, “*min Isbijāb ila al-Iskandariyya*”.<sup>300</sup> In 303/915, it is reported that Ibn Ḥibbān was in the east, a village called al-Waz which was located three *farsakh*<sup>301</sup> from the city of Nisā/Nasā.<sup>302</sup> He came there and attended one of his teacher's funerals, Abū al-‘Abbās, al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān al-Shaybānī al-Nasawī (d. 303/915).<sup>303</sup> Shu‘ayb calculated that Ibn Ḥibbān narrated about 815 ḥadīth from al-Shaybānī, this make the second-highest total of ḥadīth sources compared with others.<sup>304</sup>

Between the first/seventh to fourth/tenth centuries, the studies of ḥadīth were largely unstructured. Students casually choose to study with whomever they preferred. The main focus was the great scholars of the age who were recognized as watersheds in the flow of ḥadīth from one generation to the next.<sup>305</sup> Hence, Ibn Ḥibbān availed himself of the opportunity to collect ḥadīth in the city of Mosul with Abī Ya‘lā, Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Mawsulī (d. 307/919). Abū Ya‘lā, whose well-known title ‘ḥadīth master of Mosul’, is the highest sources for ḥadīths in *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*.<sup>306</sup> His major work included *al-Musnad* and during his stay in Mosul until he died at 97 years of age, all students haunted his circle to acquire ḥadīth with *sanad ‘āli*/elevated chain of transmission.<sup>307</sup> The rank of Abū Ya‘lā was stated by Ibn Ḥibbān: “between Abū Ya‘lā and Prophet Muḥammad only three people.”<sup>308</sup>

It was in Nishapur in the region of Khurasan that Ibn Ḥibbān met Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 311/923),<sup>309</sup> and he stayed longer with him then with Abī Ya‘lā. Through the guidance of Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Ḥibbān was firmly established in the Shāfi‘ī madhhab, or school of law which enabled him to ascertain the true meaning of a ḥadīth and to deduce from it all its legal implication. However, Melchert claims that Ibn Khuzayma's comment illuminates his Shafi‘ism, evidently a matter of theology more than jurisprudence.<sup>310</sup> Ibn Khuzayma stated that the first person to bring ‘ilm of al-Shāfi‘ī to Khurasan was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥafṣ al-Naysabūrī (d. 263/877) and he also travelled

<sup>300</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/152.

<sup>301</sup> 1 farsakh = 3 miles. The *farsakh* comes from an ancient Persian unit, the *parasang*, in principle the distance a horse would walk in an hour.

<sup>302</sup> Nisā was an ancient city to southwest of Ashbagat, Turkmenistan. *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/159.

<sup>303</sup> For reference on al-Shaybānī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/159.

<sup>304</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/12-13.

<sup>305</sup> Eerik Dickinson, *Taqdima Ibn Abī Hātim*, 20.

<sup>306</sup> Mosul is a city in northern Iraq nowadays.

<sup>307</sup> A short chain of transmission is in fact noble for the students of ḥadīth. Ahmad b. Hanbal said: “Seeking an elevated *isnad* is a *sunnah* from those who came before. See Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Kitāb Ma‘rifat Anwā' ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth*, trans. Eerik Dickinson (*An Introduction to the Science of the ḥadīth*), (Reading: Garnet Publishing Ltd, 2006), 183.

<sup>308</sup> For reference on Abī Ya‘lā, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/179.

<sup>309</sup> For references on Ibn Khuzayma, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/365.

<sup>310</sup> Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law: 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E.*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1997), 98.

to Egypt to hear the books of al-Muzanī, the most important Shāfi‘ī’s student. What he may have learnt from al-Muzanī, or was reinforced by him, was above all to renounce *taqlīd*: “I have not resorted to anyone’s [authority concerning a legal problem].”<sup>311</sup> A flip through the list, the vast majority of Ibn Ḥibbān’s teachers, ḥadīth scholars included, would be similarly trained in the Shāfi‘ī madhhab, indicating the loose boundaries of a scholarly network.

Probably before 308/920 Ibn Ḥibbān performed the pilgrimage in Makka. Ibn Ḥibbān’s teacher in Makka, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Janadī (d. 308/920) had a class in the al-Ḥarām Mosque where he gave lessons on qirā’a and ḥadīth.<sup>312</sup> Another highly esteemed scholar with whom Ibn Ḥibbān studied in Makka was Ibn al-Mundhir, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī (d. 318/930), the student of *al-Shaykhayn* Bukhārī and Muslim. Ibn al-Mundhir travelled from Nishapur and settled in Makka where importance came from his role as the chief scholar in al-Ḥarām Mosque of Makka.<sup>313</sup> Al-Shirāzī and al-Subkī considered Ibn al-Mundhir as a scholar of the Shāfi‘ī school.<sup>314</sup>

For the purpose of collecting ḥadīth and his writings in general, we can conclude that Ibn Ḥibbān passed through and made several detours studying in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. Because his āḥādīth supplied with isnād, the authors of the biographical dictionaries are able list his teachers regarding where and when he received his āḥādīth. The following anecdote quoted from Yāqūt on his entry of Bust listed the place and teachers of Ibn Ḥibbān:

Bust from Abā Aḥmad Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Qāḍī and Abā al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Junayd al-Bustī,

Herat from Abā Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘d al-Dārimī

Marw<sup>315</sup> from Abā ‘Abd Allāh and Abā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd Allāh b. Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Sa‘dī and Abū Yazīd Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Khālīd al-Madīnī

<sup>311</sup> “*Ma qalladtū ahadan*”. See Christopher Melchert, *the Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law: 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E.*, 98.

<sup>312</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān says, “*Akhbarana al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Janadī bi-Makka*”. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/380. For reference on al-Mufaḍḍal, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/258.

<sup>313</sup> For reference on Ibn al-Mundhir, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/491.

<sup>314</sup> See Gavin N. Picken, “A Scholar of the Holy Precincts: The Life, Works, and Methodology of Ibn al-Mundhir al-Nīsabūrī”, in *Oriens* vol. 38 (2010), 185-215.

<sup>315</sup> Marw is a city in the east of Turkmenistan.

A village of Sanj<sup>316</sup> from Abā ‘Alī al-Husayn b. Muḥammad b. Muṣ‘ab al-Sinjī and Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Naṣr b. Tarqūl al-Hawraqānī

In Saghd,<sup>317</sup> after the river from Abā Hafṣ ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Hamadānī

Nasā<sup>318</sup> from Abā al-‘Abbās al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān al-Shaybānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf al-Nasā’ī, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ‘Adī al-Nasā’ī.

Nishapur<sup>319</sup> from Abā al-‘Abbās Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Sarrāj al-Thaqafī and Abā Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Shirawayh al-Azdī al-Qurashī al-Naysabūrī

Arghiyan<sup>320</sup> from Abā ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Al-Musayyib b. Ishāq al-Arghiyanī

Jurjan<sup>321</sup> from ‘Imrān b. Mūsā b. Mujāshi‘ al-Jurjānī al-Sikhtiyānī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Wazzān al-Jurjānī.

Ray<sup>322</sup> from Abā al-Qāsim al-‘Abbās b. Al-Faḍl b. ‘Adhān al-Muqrī‘, ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Muslim al-Rāzī,

Al-Karkh<sup>323</sup> from Abā ‘Umārah Aḥmad b. ‘Umarah b. al-Hajjāj and al-Husayn b. Ishāq al-Aṣbahānī.

‘Askar Mukram<sup>324</sup> from Abā Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Jawāliqī al-Ahwadhī, well-known as ‘Abdān al-Ahwadhī

Shushtar<sup>325</sup> from Abā Ja‘far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Zuhayr al-Tustarī

Al-Ahwadh<sup>326</sup> from Abā al-‘Abbās Muḥammad Ya‘qūb al-Khaṭīb

Al-Ubulla<sup>327</sup> from Abā Ya‘la Muḥammad b. Zuhayr al-Ubullī, al-Husayn b. Muḥammad b. Bisṭām al-Ubullī

<sup>316</sup> Sanj is one of the villages in the region of Mary, Turkmenistan.

<sup>317</sup> Saghd is a place in Samarkand.

<sup>318</sup> Nisa or Nasa was an ancient city to southwest of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (Western Khurasa, north of Tus, west of Marw).

<sup>319</sup> Nishapur is a city in north east of Iran, near border Turkmenistan.

<sup>320</sup> Arghiyan is a village in Nishapur.

<sup>321</sup> Jurjan or Gorgan is the capital of Golestan Province, Iran.

<sup>322</sup> Reya or Ray is the capital of Rey County, Tehran Province, Iran.

<sup>323</sup> Karkh or al-Karkh is historically the name of the western half of Baghdad, Iraq.

<sup>324</sup> ‘Askar Mukram is a state in Khuzestan Province.

<sup>325</sup> Shushtar is a city in the east of Iran.

<sup>326</sup> Al-Ahwadh is a city in Khuzestan Province.

<sup>327</sup> Al-Ubulla is a town of medieval Iraq situated in the Euphrates-Tigris delta at the head of the Persian Gulf.

Basra from Abā Khalīfa al-Faḍl b. Al-Ḥubāb al-Jumhī al-Baṣrī, Abā Yaḥyā Zakariyyā b. Yaḥyā al-Sājī, Abā Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Karīm b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭābī,

Wāsiṭ<sup>328</sup> from Abā Muḥammad Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad b. Sinān al-Qaṭṭān, al-Khalīl b. Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī, and his mother is daughter of Tamīm b. al-Muntasir

Qumm al-Ṣilḥ<sup>329</sup> from ʿAbd Allāh b. Quḥṭubah b. Marzūq al-Ṣilḥī.

Nahr Sabis, one of village in Wāsiṭ,<sup>330</sup> Khallād b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Wāsiṭī

Baghdad from Abā al-ʿAbbās Ḥāmid b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī, Abā Aḥmad al-Haytham b. Khalaf al-Dūrī, Abā al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baghawī

Kufah from Abā Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Zaydān al-Bajalī.

Makkah from Abā Bakr Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir al-Naysabūrī, al-faqīh, an author of *Kitāb al-Ashrāf fī Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahāʾ*, Abā Saʿīd al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Jundī

Samirrā,<sup>331</sup> from ʿAlī b. Saʿīd al-ʿAskarī, ʿAskar Samirrā

Mosul from Abā Yaʿla Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. al-Muthannā al-Mawsulī, Hārūn b. al-Miskīn al-Baladī, Abā Jābir Zayd b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Ḥayyān al-Mawṣulī and Rūḥ b. ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Mawṣulī

A state of Sinjar<sup>332</sup> from ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Haytham al-Mawṣulī.

Nusaybin<sup>333</sup> from Abā al-Sirrī Hāshim b. Yaḥyā al-Nusaybīnī and Musaddad b. Yaʿqūb b. Ishāq al-Falūsī.

Kafartūtha,<sup>334</sup> from house of Rabīʿāh, Muḥammad b. al-Husayn b. Abī Maʿshar al-Sulamī.

Sarghamurṭa, from house of Muḍar Abā Badr Aḥmad b. Khālīd b. ʿAbd al-Mālik b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Musarra al-Ḥarrānī

Al-Rāfiqa<sup>335</sup> from Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Farūkh al-Baghdādī,

<sup>328</sup> Wasit nowadays located in Wasit Governate, south east of Kut in eastern Iraq.

<sup>329</sup> Qumm al-Ṣilḥ is a large river near Wasit, Iraq.

<sup>330</sup> Nahr Sabis is a place near to Wasit.

<sup>331</sup> Samirrā was built by al-Muʿtasim between Baghdad and Tikrit

<sup>332</sup> Also known as Shingal, is a town in Sinjar District, Nineveh province, Iraq.

<sup>333</sup> Nusaybin is a city in Mardin Province, southern Turkey.

<sup>334</sup> Kafartūtha is a village in Palestine.

<sup>335</sup> Al-Rāfiqa is a city in Syria located on the north bank of the Euphrates.

Al-Raqqā<sup>336</sup> from al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Qaṭṭān

Manbij<sup>337</sup> from ‘Umar b. Sa‘īd b. Sinān al-Ḥāfiẓ and Ṣāliḥ b. al-Asbagh b. ‘Āmir al-Tanūkhī.

Aleppo from ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. ‘Imrān al-Jurjānī

Musaysah from Abā Ṭālib Aḥmad b. Dāwūd b. Muḥsin b. Hilāl al-Musaysī

Antakya<sup>338</sup> from Abā ‘Alī Waṣīf b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥāfiẓ

Tarsus<sup>339</sup> from Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Darqī and Ibrāhīm b. Abī Umayyah al-Tarsusī

Adana<sup>340</sup> from Muḥammad b. ‘Allān al-Adhanī

Sidon<sup>341</sup> from Muḥammad b. Abī al-Ma‘āfi b. Sulaymān al-Ṣaydawī.

Beirut from Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Birūtī, well-known as al-Makhul

Homs<sup>342</sup> from Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Faḍl al-Kulā‘ī al-Rahīb

Damascus from Abā al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. ‘Umayr b. Jawṣa‘ al-Ḥāfiẓ, Ja‘far b. Aḥmad b. ‘Āsim al-Anṣārī, Abā al-‘Abbās Ḥājib b. Arkīn al-Farghānī al-Ḥāfiẓ

Bayt al-Maqdis from ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Maqdisī al-Khāṭib

Ramla<sup>343</sup> from Abā Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Qutayba al-‘Asqalānī

Egypt from Abā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb b. ‘Alī al-Nasā‘ī, Sa‘īd b. Dāwūd b. Wirdān al-Miṣrī, ‘Alī b. al-Husayn b. Sulaymān b. al-Mu‘addāl and many of them from this generation but we have mentioned.

<sup>336</sup> Also called Rakka, Raqqā is a city in Syria located on the north bank of the Euphrates River, about 160 kilometres east of Aleppo.

<sup>337</sup> Manbij was an ancient state located between Euphrates and Aleppo.

<sup>338</sup> Antakya is a seat of the Hatay Province in Southern Turkey.

<sup>339</sup> Tarsus was a historic city in south-central Turkey, 20km from the Mediterranean.

<sup>340</sup> Adana is a large city in southern Turkey

<sup>341</sup> Sidon is the third-largest city in Lebanon. It is located in the south governorate of Lebanon, on the Mediterranean coast.

<sup>342</sup> Homs is a city in western Syria and the capital of the Homs Governorate.

<sup>343</sup> Ramla is a city in central Palestine.

We also found additional information which is not mentioned by Yāqūt or al-Dhahabī in relating to Ibn Ḥibbān's travels and his meeting with some teachers. In some places Ibn Ḥibbān stated that "I heard this ḥadīth from a (Name of person) in (Name of place)" but almost entirely he omitted the name of places in the transmitter chains.<sup>344</sup> Among the places are Jundaysabūr,<sup>345</sup> Harran,<sup>346</sup> Tyre,<sup>347</sup> Ashkelon,<sup>348</sup> and Fuṣṭāt.<sup>349</sup>

## 2.3 The Trial of Ibn Ḥibbān

Ibn Ḥibbān's scholarly career was not parted from tribulations, as an explanation of the social scenery will show. Al-Ḥākim said people envy his advantage and achievement.<sup>350</sup> In light of Ibn Ḥibbān's strong affiliation with the prophet tradition, it seems difficult to believe that some of his contemporary banished him for his words on the prophethood. The issue of prophethood had begun when Ibn Ḥibbān said: "Prophethood is knowledge and action." Because of this apparently problematic saying some people judged him to be a *zindīq*. According to Ibn Khallikān and al-Dhahabī, the tremendous tension of this issue led the Caliph to declare that Ibn Ḥibbān should be killed.<sup>351</sup> Al-Dhahabī would understandably have viewed it as a philosophical statement, hence these words hard to be interpreted in a good sense according to him. However, he wrote to secure and incisively identified the polemical circus around Ibn Ḥibbān declaration:

They objected to Ibn Ḥibbān because he said, "Prophethood is knowledge and action." They judged him to be a *zindīq* and the Caliph was informed of that and he wrote that he should be killed, until one of the ḥadīth said, "that is a philosophical self."

Ibn Ḥibbān did not mean that prophethood is an acquisition that can be acquired by exercise in knowledge and action, as is the position of the philosophers. He meant that prophethood demands additional knowledge and action, and then that is given to the one whom Allāh chooses. His words are indicated by the words of the Almighty, Allāh knows best where to place his message.<sup>352</sup>

As for the belief that the prophets are not above people in knowledge and action and that they choose appointment, that has no basis in the Sharī'ah at all. Or he might

<sup>344</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Rawḍa al-'Uqal ā*, (Cairo: Sharika al-Quds li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī'), 283; 285; 296.

<sup>345</sup> Jundaysabur is a city in Khuzestan Province.

<sup>346</sup> Harran was a major ancient city in Upper Mesopotamia whose site is near the village of Altinbasak, Turkey.

<sup>347</sup> Tyre is a city in the south governorate of Lebanon.

<sup>348</sup> Ashkelon or 'Asqalan is a coastal city near to Gaza, Palestine.

<sup>349</sup> Fustat is the first capital of Egypt under Muslim rule. The remains of the city were eventually absorbed by nearby Cairo.

<sup>350</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 52/253.

<sup>351</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 52/253; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā*, 14/96.

<sup>352</sup> The Qur'ān 6:124.

have meant that the prophets possess greater knowledge and more actions after they become prophets. Because of that Allāh has protected them from all wrong actions and errors. This is a meaning which is agreed upon by all the people of Islam.

This is also an excellent possibility as he did not mean to contain the beginning in the report. It is like that statement, ‘*Hajj* is ‘Arafa’. It is known that a person does not perform *hajj* by merely standing at ‘Arafa. He is mentioning the *hajj* along with it.’<sup>353</sup>

Another criticism concerns the issue of *ḥadd* (definition) for Allāh. In the introduction of *al-Thiqāt* he said: “*Alḥamdulillāh alladhi laysa lahu ḥadd maḥdūd* (Praise belongs to Allāh who has no limited extent).”<sup>354</sup> Abū Ismā‘īl al-Anṣārī (d.481/1089) asked Yahyā b. ‘Ammār about Ibn Ḥibbān, and Yahyā replied: “I met him and we expelled him from Sijistān although he has vast knowledge but no religious obedience. He came to us and negates *ḥadd* for Allāh and we expelled him.”<sup>355</sup> Ibn Ḥajar tried to protect him by saying: “The truth is with Ibn Ḥibbān.”<sup>356</sup> Al-Subkī also tried: “Look at how ignorant the critic, would that you know, who should been criticized, to determine *ḥadd* for Allāh or to negate?”<sup>357</sup> Al-Dhahabī later discussed about the issue of *ḥadd* in Ibn Ḥibbān’s entry with saying:

To negate or determine *ḥadd* for Allāh both are exaggerations in words, to be silent from both is better if there is no evidence to negate or determine it.... Whoever consigns to Allāh and silent is safe and has followed the predecessor... The negation by all of you is also going astray, because to debate on what Allāh has not permitted and any evidence for determining or negating it. Verily, from perfection of Islam that a person abandons what does not concern himself. Glorify to Allāh from any limitation or attributes except by what He described Himself, or with purpose he taught His messengers that no equal and no conformity of Him. ((There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer))<sup>358 359</sup>

During the lifetime of Ibn Ḥibbān and in the decades after his death, the question of *ḥadd* in particular remain controversy among theologians.<sup>360</sup> Even as late a scholar as al-Dhahabī’s teacher, Ibn Taymiyya wrote a book *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyya* and discussed the

<sup>353</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/96. This passage is also translated in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dihlawī, *The Garden of the ḥadīth Scholars*, trans. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley, (London: Turath Publishing, 2007), 104.

<sup>354</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn Khan, (Hyderabad: Dā‘ira al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1973), 1/1.

<sup>355</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/96.

<sup>356</sup> *Lisan al-Mizān*, 7/46.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> The Qur’ān 42:11.

<sup>359</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/98.

<sup>360</sup> See also Edwin E. Calverley and James W. Pollock, *Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2002), 1/482.



topic of *ḥadd* for Allāh. Ibn Taymiyya quoted Qādī Abū Ya‘lā (d. 458/1065)’s<sup>361</sup> attempt to reconcile that Allāh has a *ḥadd* that only He knows and Allāh does not have a *ḥadd*

That is Abū Ya‘lā said: The place in which (Aḥmad)<sup>362</sup> said that He is on the throne with a *ḥadd*, its meaning is of His essence that is in line with the throne, so it (the throne) is His *ḥadd* and His direction. And the place which he said He is over throne without *ḥadd*, its meaning is what is besides the direction in line with the throne – that is above, behind, front, right and left.

The difference between the downwards direction parallel to the throne and other than it which we mentioned [i.e the other five directions] is that the downward direction is in line with the throne as established from evidence, and the throne is limited (*maḥdūd*). Hence it is possible to describe of the essence that is in line with it and that it is a limit and direction. That is not so in other than it, because it is not in line that which is limited, but it is traversing through the right and the left, up, front and behind, without a limit. This is why none of these [five directions] are described with *ḥadd* or direction; whereas the direction of throne is parallel to what opposes it from the direction of [His] self, but it is not in line with the whole [of His] self because it has no limit.<sup>363</sup>

However, Ibn Taymiyya does not agree with Abū Ya‘lā. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the difference between downward direction and the other directions is not that the first is limited and the others unlimited, but that the limit in the first is known while the limits in the other five directions are unknown.<sup>364</sup> This is how Ibn Taymiyya reconciles between the Allāh has *ḥadd* that only He knows and Allāh does not have a *ḥadd*.

We also have report about the criticism of Ibn Ḥibbān by his own student, Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Amr al-Sulaymānī al-Bikandī (d. 404/1014), from a village Bikand, near Bukhārā.<sup>365</sup> Al-Sulaymānī classified Ibn Ḥibbān in his book under the “Chapter of the Liars” and quoted what was said by his teacher Sahl b. Al-Surī: “Don’t write from him, he is a liar.”<sup>366</sup> When al-Sulaymānī was asked by al-Ḥākim about Ibn Ḥibbān, he said in the end: “Then I looked at his face, the face of liar, and his words, the words of liar.”<sup>367</sup> Al-Dhahabī in his *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* began the entry for al-Sulaymānī’s biography with appreciation of his

<sup>361</sup> Al-Dhahabī introduced him as a Master in Ḥanbalite. He has lots of works in theological issues such as *al-Radd ‘alā al-Karāmiyya*, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Salimiyya wa al-Mujassima*, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahmiyya*, *al-Kalām fī al-Istiḥāṭ* and so on. See *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* 18/89.

<sup>362</sup> On biography of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 11/177.

<sup>363</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyya*, (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex, 1426H), 3/735.

<sup>364</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyya*, 3/737.

<sup>365</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Bulḍān*, 1/419.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

status of *Imām*, a ḥadīth scholar ‘*mā warā’ al-nahr*’.<sup>368</sup> Although al-Dhahabī appraised al-Sulaymānī, he took a cautious step after giving a detail for al-Sulaymānī’s biography and suggested: “I saw al-Sulaymānī has a book denouncing great scholars, don’t listen to him what is irregular.”<sup>369</sup>

## 2.4 The Career of Ibn Ḥibbān

Ibn Ḥibbān is considered as a ḥadīth master of his time and Lucas has called him as ‘renaissance muḥaddith’.<sup>370</sup> It is difficult to ascertain exactly when Ibn Ḥibbān commenced his career as an author. Although it might have begun earlier, available sources such al-Ḥākim point out to Herat, Marw and Bukhara as its starting point.<sup>371</sup> According to Ibn ‘Asākir, Ibn Ḥibbān wrote in various fields of knowledge. He wrote his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tārīkh*, and *al-Ḍu‘āfā’* and many others, while he was teaching in Samarqand.<sup>372</sup> Near 320/932, Ibn Ḥibbān settled in Samarqand for a long period of time and was he appointed *qāḍī* there, but we found no evidence concerning his judgeship from those places. Ibn ‘Asākir added that during Ibn Ḥibbān’s residence in Samarqand, the Samanid emir,<sup>373</sup> al-Muẓaffar b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Saman built a *ṣuffa*/pavilion for scholars, especially scholars of ḥadīth to give lectures.<sup>374</sup> J. W. Fuck insists in this position Ibn Ḥibbān had many enemies.<sup>375</sup> As mentioned by al-Sulaymānī, Ibn Ḥibbān owed his appointment to Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Muṣ‘abī, for whom he had written a book on the *Qarāmiṭa*, and that the people of Samarqand drove him out.<sup>376</sup>

In the latter half of the third/ninth century, Samarqand served as the capital of the Samanid Empire before it was shifted to Bukhara in 279/892.<sup>377</sup> Accordingly, the Samanid

<sup>368</sup> *Mā warā’ al-nahr*, known Transoxiana means what (is) beyond the (Oxus) river. This is an ancient which located in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and southwest Kazakhstan nowadays. See Siyar A ‘lām al-Nubalā’, 17/200.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Hadith Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 91.

<sup>371</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq* 52/251.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> The Samanids traced their descent to Samankhuda of Balkh, a scion the aristocratic *dihqan* class that had governed Persia before Islamic conquest, who was said to have converted to Islam by an Umayyad governor of Khurasan. Gardizi’s account that it was the Caliph al-Ma’mun who converted Samankhuda and promoted his son Asad and the latter’s four sons, while clearly apocryphal, reflects al-Ma’mun’s importance as a legitimating figure with respect to the rule of Khurasan. See Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, 15.

<sup>374</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq* 52/251.

<sup>375</sup> J. W. Fuck, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3/798.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Josef W. Meri, *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia vol. 2*, (Oxon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 694.

Empire is independent and governs the province of Sughd, the ancient Sogdiana,<sup>378</sup> after it had received recognition in the year 261/875 when the Caliph al-Mu‘tamid sends the investiture for all of Sughd to Naṣr b. Aḥmad (d. 279/892).<sup>379</sup> However, the emergence of the Samanids as a powerful force only began after Naṣr’s brother, Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad (d. 295/907) took full control. During his brother Naṣr’s reign, Ismā‘īl was sent to take control of Bukhara in 260/874 which was in a chaotic state in the vacuum left by the fall of the Tahirids. Ismā‘īl therefore continued to rule the Samanids Empire from Bukhara after Naṣr died and made it the new centre of the Samanids state. Fyfe asserts that Ismā‘īl shaped Bukhara into both capital and the centre of a cultural and literary due to his ability to attract scholars into the region.<sup>380</sup>

Meisami and Treadwell make further observations that the reign of Ismā‘īl’s grandson Naṣr (II) b. Aḥmad (d. 331/933), who came to the throne at the age of eight witnessed a transformation of the cultural and religious orientation of the state aristocracy.<sup>381</sup> This was through the medium of the executive class who advised the young ruler possessed of authority which their predecessor had lacked. Meisami quotes from *Zayn al-Akhbār* by Gardizi, that Naṣr’s first Prime Minister, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Jayhanī (d. 313/925) was a capable administrator as well as a famous geographer and intellectual person.<sup>382</sup> Thus Bukhara achieved an intellectual and cultural refinement in this period as a result of an intense cultivation of Sunni theology with some admixture of the sciences such as astronomy, astrology, mathematics and medical art.<sup>383</sup> Naṣr did much as well to foster Persian literature and what has been called the ‘Persian literary renaissance’ which came under the patrons of the Samanids.<sup>384</sup> Suffice it to say that during Naṣr’s rule both Arabic and Persian books were

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<sup>378</sup> The province of Sughd, the ancient Sogdiana, may be taken as including the fertile lands, lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes, which were watered by two river systems, namely the Zarafshan, or Sughd river, on which Samarqand and Bukhara stood, and the river which flowed by the cities of Kish and Nasaf. More properly, however, Sughd is the name of the district surrounding Samarkand; for Bukhara, Kish, and Nasaf were each counted separate districts. See Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 460.

<sup>379</sup> R. N. Fyfe, *The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 4*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 137.

<sup>380</sup> Naṣr b. Aḥmad found himself the virtually independent ruler of Transoxiana with his capital in Samarqand. He consolidated his power by sending his brother to Bukhara which was in chaotic state. See R. N. Fyfe, *The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 4*, 137.

<sup>381</sup> Treadwell W.L., *The Samanids: The First Islamic Dynasty of Central Asia in Early Islamic Iran. The Political History of the Samanid State*, (PhD Dissertation University of Oxford, 1991), 170.

<sup>382</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, 16.

<sup>383</sup> Sarfraz Khan, *Muslim Reformist Political Thought: Revivalists, Modernists and Free Will*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2003),

<sup>384</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, 15.

produced in the state which saw the assembly of a library. Later in the Samanid era, this library earned the high tribute of scholars including Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037).<sup>385</sup>

Presumably, Ibn Ḥibbān came to Bukhara in the year 329/940 or 330/941 after his long residence in Samarqand according to Yāqūt's from al-Sulaymānī's source. Later al-Sulaymānī conveys the impression that he gained the enmity of the people of Bukhara which had him expelled from the city. It is most likely after his expulsion from Bukhara, which al-Ḥākim reported in *Tārīkh Naysabūr*, Ibn Ḥibbān migrated to Nishapur in the year 334/945. Al-Ḥākim who was 13 years old boy at that moment said, "He returned to Nishapur in the year 334/945, hence we came to him on Friday after prayer and we also asked him about ḥadīth. He looked towards the people and I was the youngest among them, he said: Please write. I replied: Yes. Then I wrote about him." As Bulliet has pointed out, a lot of people visited Nishapur during the period under consideration; their biographies are often preserved in the city's biographical dictionaries. Only the most important of visitors, however, had classes convened for them, no matter how short their stay, as a mark of honour.<sup>386</sup> In assessing Ibn Ḥibbān's achievements and influence upon his stay in this region, al-Dhahabī adorns him with the honorific '*Shaykh*/Master of Khurasan'.<sup>387</sup> Certainly his appointment as a *qāḍī* briefly in Nasa, had been occasioned before his return for the last time to Nishapur in the 337/948.

As stated by al-Ḥākim, in the year 337/948 Ibn Ḥibbān built a *khānqāh*<sup>388</sup> in Nishapur in which he read all of his books to the students.<sup>389</sup> It is reported also that he provided the students of his *khānqāh* with an allowance. However, he is not known to have exercised any profession aside from teaching in Nishapur. Al-Ḥākim himself was the headmaster of Dār al-Sunna or Madrasa al-Sibghī which was founded by and named for al-Ḥākim's teacher, Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Sibghī (d. 342/953).<sup>390</sup> As such Nishapur achieved a worldwide level of prominence for ḥadīth scholarship during this century and was the only serious rival to

<sup>385</sup> R. N. Fyfe, *The Cambridge History of Iran* vol. 4, 143.

<sup>386</sup> Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 55.

<sup>387</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/26.

<sup>388</sup> The term *khanqah* is made up of two Persian words *khana-gah* and means 'a place of residence' for the Sufis, a 'place at the table' or a 'place of recitation'. This word is used in Persian regions and also in Arab regions such as Syria, Iraq and Egypt. A typical *khanqah* was a self-reliant hostel, a meeting and socialisation place, a *madrasa* or school and, to some extent, a mosque, with all of the necessary annexes, services, amenities and facilities. See Omer Sphahic, *From Mosque to Khanqa: The Origins and Rise of Sufi Institutions*, (Kemanusiaan The Asian Journal of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia Press, vol. 21, no. 1, 2014), 13; John Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 171.

<sup>389</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/26.

<sup>390</sup> Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, 249

Baghdad. The educational system of Nishapur, then, was a system of teachers.<sup>391</sup> These were the men who either founded their own madrasas or for whom they were endowed. Madrasa or mosque, the quality of the education depended upon the teacher, not the place. In other words, they maintained, and to a great extent controlled, the educational system. *Madrasa Miyān Dahiya* is the earliest evidence of a madrasa in Nishapur conforming to al-Ḥākim's notice on the life of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Maḥmūd b. Hamza known as al-Qaṭṭān contained in the section of his work covering who died between roughly 270/883 and 314/926.<sup>392</sup>

After staying in Samarqand, Bukhara, Nasa, and Nishapur, Ibn Ḥibbān returned to his native Sijistān in 340/951.<sup>393</sup> Perhaps this homecoming was the final migration after a very long expedition. Nevertheless, this very long expedition was a particularly interesting case, as he is one of the few ḥadīth scholars to have achieved proficiency in non-religious sciences. Almost each informant and bibliographer records information about his expertise in philology, medicine and astronomy.<sup>394</sup> When Ibn Ḥibbān arrived in 340/951, Sijistan was still under the power of Ṣaffārids,<sup>395</sup> Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. al-Layth (d. 352/963), alias Ibn Bānū who enjoyed a long and successful rule.<sup>396</sup> The affiliation with al-Layth, was through his mother, Sayyida Bānū, whence his name Ibn Bānū or Ibn Bānūya (Bānawayh) bt. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. al-Layth.

The meeting between Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Bānū is obscure, at least according to the way the reports present it. Relevant to Ibn Bānū, Ibn al-Dawādīri suggests he was an Ismā'īlī preacher named as '*Ibn Bābūya sahib Sijistan*', which one might read as 'Ibn Bānūya, ruler of Sistan'.<sup>397</sup> It is however more likely that it should be read as 'Ibn Bandana, missionary of Sistan' i.e. Abū Ya'qub al-Sijistani.<sup>398</sup> Ibn Bānū and his son Khalaf were famed as patrons of philosophy, and it was perhaps their interest in philosophy which generated rumours of Ismā'īlism at the Sistani court.<sup>399</sup> From the story of al-Sulaymānī, Ibn Ḥibbān is said to have

<sup>391</sup> Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, 54.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>393</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 52/251.

<sup>394</sup> *Al-Ansāb*. 2/208. *Mu'jam al-Buldān*. 1/415. *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, 7/291. *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* 3/920. *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 16/92. *Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-A'yān* 176.

<sup>395</sup> R. N. Fyfe, *The Cambridge History of Iran* vol. 4, 131.

<sup>396</sup> Sistan achieved varying degrees of independence under the Ṣaffārid dynasty, which ruled from 253/867 in uninterrupted succession, despite invasion and occupation by the Samanids, Ghaznavids, and Mongols, until the end of the fifteenth century. The founders, Ya'qub was a coppersmith (*ṣaffār*) in Zaranj and his brother 'Amr a simple muleteer or stone mason. See R. N. Fyfe, *The Cambridge History of Iran* vol. 4, 109.

<sup>397</sup> Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, (Cairo, 1961), 6/95.

<sup>398</sup> Chase F. Robinson, *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2003), 54.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

a written book in Samarqand about the *Qarāmiṭa* (Carmathians) for al-Muṣ‘ābī whilst he was qāḍī there. Later, he presented the book again to secure government appointments from ‘Ibn Bānū’ (text, Ibn Bābū) in Sistan.<sup>400</sup> A few reports were circulated to show that Ibn Ḥibbān was in the circle or *majālis* (gatherings) held under the ruler’s auspices (presumably in Zaranj), at which he presided over discussions on philosophical and ethical problems.

Ibn Bānū handled many of his court sessions with the intellectual by presenting questions, simultaneously the lines of *questiones naturals*.<sup>401</sup> He commented upon sayings of the ancient as well as Arab proverbs and it went beyond wisdom literature. Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, Ṭalḥa b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, Abū Tammām Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī and Abū Hāmid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Isfirāzī are among the leading figures in Ibn Bānū’s circle. Nevertheless, it would be an exaggeration to say that Ibn Bānū had inspired the cultivation of science and philosophy from the remarks of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. 391/1000). According to Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, Ibn Bānū encouraged the pursuit of philosophy; he had surrounded himself with its disciples and materially supported their enterprise. In one *majlis* as Abū Sulaymān recorded in *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma*, Ibn Bānū gave them a lesson on the pitfalls of self-love and the dangers of flattery. Among the texts on Ibn Bānū the *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma* states:

Abū Sulaymān said: One night, King Abū Ja’far (Ibn Bānū) questioned a group that was with him, including al-Isfirāzī (Abū Hāmid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad), Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṭalḥa (b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī), Abū Tammām (Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī), and others: “Why is it said concerning the circulation of a report, ‘The truest report is accompanied by sneezing?’”

They were silent. They then replied: “We have nothing to say about it; [sneezing] is an effect of nature, depending upon the excess or deficiency of the humours, and this kind of thing hardly has a proper final cause.”

He said: “All this is evading the issue. Nature gives warning in such matters by virtue of soul, which informs it, dictating to it. This [effect of soul] traverse nature, which responds to it with excitement. And this [excitement] attests to something that is resolved and accepted. If this were not so then the imagination of everyone who hears a sneeze in the course of conversation would not be reassured only in this way. It is as though the soul signals in this manner. The truth of this is in moderation; its falsehood, in excess and deficiency, strength and weakness.”<sup>402</sup>

<sup>400</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*. 1/415.

<sup>401</sup> Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam*, 16.

<sup>402</sup> We follow the translation of Kraemer. See *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle*, 21.

Since Ibn Ḥibbān appears to live in Sistan in the time of Ibn Bānū's rule, the assumption of a common source the *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma* might be justified. However, it is still unclear whether this was the exact Ibn Ḥibbān. The question of Ibn Ḥibbān's identity must remain open, although on the basis of contemporary sources it can be deduced that there was a possibility of a meeting between them. Kraemer is tempted to identify Ibn Ḥibbān in the above source but is unsure whether Ibn Ḥibbān was a philosopher or not.<sup>403</sup> And al-Shahrastani omits him from the list of philosophers in *al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*, as he is not mentioned again in the *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma*.<sup>404</sup>

After extensive travels where he served the Samanids and Ṣaffārids, Ibn Ḥibbān spent the last years of his life back in Bust. In his hometown, he built up his *madrasa*, students housing and personal library from his *khizāna*<sup>405</sup> or collections and writings. He endowed all of his collections to the students as well as awarding them an allowance. Al-Arna'ūt added these collections cannot be borrowed and taken outside Ibn Ḥibbān's library.<sup>406</sup> And the copying process of these collections was to be carried out inside the library. Almost one hundred years later, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī quoted from Mas'ūd al-Sijzī that the destruction of Ibn Ḥibbān's library resulted from weak ruler, internal revolt and the conquerors who destroyed the collections.<sup>407</sup>

## 2.5 Ibn Ḥibbān's Works

Ibn Ḥibbān was an extremely prolific author whom Yāqūt once said "produced works in the science of ḥadīth transmission that no one else could have written."<sup>408</sup> From what we encounter, Ibn Ḥibbān showed a passion to write of each he considered as a knowledge and information. One story reported by Abī Hāmid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Naysabūri illustrates this, "We were some way in Nishapur with Ibn Khuzayma, and Ibn Ḥibbān was also with us and he asked Ibn Khuzayma again and again until Ibn Khuzayma said: Oh tranquillity steps aside from me, don't harm me, or a word similar to that. Then Ibn Ḥibbān

<sup>403</sup> Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam*, 22.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>405</sup> 'Khizāna' could refer to collections of various sizes ranging from a fully-fledged library with several thousand volumes to a mere book chest or several shelves for storing manuscripts. While 'Library' refers in the following to manuscript holdings that were, at least theoretically, accessible to a wider audience of users in contrast to 'private collections' where the owner controlled access. See Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands*, (Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2012), 125.

<sup>406</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/26.

<sup>407</sup> al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Jāmi' li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Sāmi'*, ed. Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risala, 1996), 2/470.

<sup>408</sup> *Mu'jam al-Buldān* 1/419.

wrote down what had been said. He has been asked: Did you write that? He answered: Yes I write everything from him.”<sup>409</sup>

It is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān’s primary interest was in reports transmitted from the earlier generations of Muslims, in particular from the Prophet Muḥammad and perhaps as a means for constructing his method on ḥadīth studies. His most famous, of course, was his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, originally titled *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’*. Although most of the works do not exist, as many as eighty-one works are identified; only about ten survive until the present day. And a closer look at these titles indicates that he had ventured into almost every aspect of Islamic studies including theology, tafsīr, ḥadīth, fiqh, Arabic literature and so on. It is a fortunate that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī was inspired to name these books as he recorded from the words of Mas‘ūd al-Sijzī. The earliest record of his literary output is the one provided by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his *al-Jāmi’*.<sup>410</sup>

Apart from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s allusions, Ibn Ḥibbān literary production can also be determined on the basis of extant works. There are many citations in other scholars’ writings which enable us to identify works attributed to Ibn Ḥibbān. Titles of works attributed to Ibn Ḥibbān are furnished mostly in the science of ḥadīth transmission books and he himself mentioned them. In modern scholarship, Brockelmann and Sezgin listed ten titles of all the survived works of Ibn Ḥibbān.<sup>411</sup> These topics can be divided into theology, tafsir, ḥadīth and bio-biography.

1. *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘ala al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’*. Not like previous ḥadīth books which arrange the aḥādīth in chapters or by the *isnāds*, Ibn Ḥibbān arranged them in innovative new arrangements. He first mentioned the divisions and then mentioned their categories. This book unfortunately is not traceable in any form. It was rearranged later by Ibn Balaban (d. 739/1338) in systematically chapters and he called it *al-Iḥsān fī Tartīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*. This published critical edition by Muassasa al-Risāla, Beirut, 1994 was edited by Shu‘ayb al-Arna’ūṭ in eighteen volumes.
2. *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*. This book was published by al-Kutub al-Thaqafiya, Hyderabad, 1983. The main topic is a description of approved transmitters from the first/seven

<sup>409</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* 1/419.

<sup>410</sup> *Al-Jāmi’ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Sāmi’*, 2/447.

<sup>411</sup> *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 1/273. *Geschichte der Arabischen Schriftums*, 1/189.



to the third/ninth century. Ibn Ḥibbān made an assessment of twenty levels of good transmitters.

3. *Maʿrifāt al-Majrūhīn wa al-Dhuʿafāʾ min al-Muḥaddithīn*. This book was published in India and Egypt with notes by al-Dāraqūṭnī (d. 385/995). It was later reproduced in Halab, Syria with notes by Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm al-Zāyid in three volumes. Ibn Ḥibbān says that he would describe those weak transmitters in this book who have been considered weak by previous critics and opted for moderation instead of going into finer considerations. He also declared that he summarized it from his *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*.
4. *Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār*. The work titled *Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār* was edited by Manfred Fleischhammer which recorded life-sketches of 1602 persons of varying lengths. It has been included in one of The Bibliotheca Islamica series books, a joint project of the Orient-Institut Beirut and German Oriental Society for the critical edition of Arabic texts. This book was meant to provide an abridgement of famous and reliable ḥadīth transmitters from six regions (Hijaz, Iraq, Sham, Egypt, Yemen and Khorasan) between the second/seventh and fourth/ninth century.
5. *Rawḍa al-ʿUqalāʾ wa Nuzha al-Fuḍalāʾ*. The research on the work titled *Rawḍa al-ʿUqalāʾ wa Nuzha al-Fuḍalāʾ* has been conducted by Muḥammad Muhy al-Dīn, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Razzāq and Muḥammad Hamīd Faqīh. Shawkat Toorawa classifies it as adāb anthology literature.<sup>412</sup> It is a training manual with lectures, guidance and ritual thematically arranged of bits of prose and poetry in forty-seven chapters. The prose is laced with Quranic verses, ḥadīth and couplets reflects familiarity with philosophical gnomologies.
6. *Asmāʾ al-Ṣaḥāba*.<sup>413</sup>
7. *Kitāb al-ʿAzama*.

<sup>412</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, 1/334.

<sup>413</sup> ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khalīlī al-Ḥanafī, in 1165H has copied the text. It comprises 72 folios, respectively. See ʿAmmār b. Saʿīd, *Fihris Makhṭūṭāt al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf wa ʿUlūmih*, (Madinah: Maktaba al-Malik ʿAbd al-Azīz, 2002), 78.

8. *Mukhtaṣar fī al-Ḥudūd*.<sup>414</sup>

9. *Tafsīr*.<sup>415</sup>

10. *Ḥadīth al-Aqrān*.<sup>416</sup>

## 2.6 The Students of Ibn Ḥibbān

Another leading theme of Ibn Ḥibbān's life has been transmission of his knowledge to students. Most notably, Ibn Ḥibbān had many students who later became prominent figures in ḥadīth scholarship. Overall, Yāqūt, Ibn 'Asākir, al-Dhahabī and al-Arna'ūt named sixteen who studied under Ibn Ḥibbān. The *nisba* (toponymic surname) of Ibn Ḥibbān's student in the list indicates the geographical distribution of those who studied under him.

Abū 'Umar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Nūqātī (d. 382/992), a prolific writer in the field of Arabic philology. He wrote a lot when he was at Herat, Marw, Balkh and Transoxiana.<sup>417</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad b. Mahdi al-Dāraqūṭnī (d. 385/995), he was known as *amīr al-mu'minīn fī al-ḥadīth* (commander of the faithful in ḥadīth) and his critique of Bukhārī and Muslim (the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*) was popular.<sup>418</sup>

Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998), the first scholar to produce a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. He spent most of his time in Bust.<sup>419</sup>

Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Manda al-Aṣbahānī (d. 396/1005), like his teacher, he has travelled a lot as a student of *ḥadīth* and al-Dhahabī

<sup>414</sup> Sezgin says that perhaps this is a collection of definition in *uṣūl al-dīn*. See *Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums*, 1/189; Ph. S. Van Ronkel lists *Mukhtaṣar fī al-Ḥudūd* among the available manuscript in Museum Pusat Batavia (Jakarta). See Philippus Samuel van Ronkel, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences*, (Jakarta: Albrecht, 1913), 170.

<sup>415</sup> 'Adab doubts the attribution of this *Tafsīr* to Ibn Ḥibbān in regards to unnamed of manuscripts and several other factors. See 'Adab Hamsh, *Al-Imām Ibn Ḥibbān wa Manhajuhu*, 1/324.

<sup>416</sup> *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 1/273. *Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums*, 1/189. *Al-Imām Ibn Ḥibbān wa Manhajuhu*, 1/381.

<sup>417</sup> Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Udabā: Irshād al-Arīb ila Ma'rifa al-Adīb*, (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993), 5/2345. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi Tartīb Ibn Balabān*, 1/26.

<sup>418</sup> *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, 16/450.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid, 17/23.

called him ‘*al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Jawwāl*’ (An Imam, scholar of ḥadīth who travel a lot).<sup>420</sup>

Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bustī (d. 400/1009), secretary to Baytuz, the Turkish ghulam commander in Bust, but later entered Sebuktigin’s service after the latter took over Bust. He is famous for his poetry and his dazzling epistolary style, so that his extensive use of paronomasia earned him the title of *ṣāhib al-tajnīs*.<sup>421</sup>

Abū ‘Alī Maṣṣūr b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khālīd al-Dhuhlī al-Khālīdī (d. 402/1011).<sup>422</sup>

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī (d. 403/1012), and also known as *Ibn al-Baiyi*. He wrote upon Ibn Ḥibbān when he was 13, and gained substantial reputation for writing *al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*.<sup>423</sup>

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ‘Ghunjar’ al-Bukhari (d. 412/1021).<sup>424</sup> He also known as historian and wrote *Tārīkh al-Bukhārī* (now lost) which was one of the earliest sources on scholars in Bukhara.<sup>425</sup>

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khushnam al-Sharūfī (n.d).<sup>426</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Zawzānī (n.d), He transmitted *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* as mentioned by al-Dhahabī in *al-Mushtabih*.<sup>427</sup>

Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Salama al-Ḥanbalī (n.d).<sup>428</sup>

Abū Maslama Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Shāfi‘ī (n.d).<sup>429</sup>

Al-Ḥasan b. Maṣṣūr al-Asfijābī (n.d).<sup>430</sup>

<sup>420</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 17/28-30.

<sup>421</sup> C. E. Bosworth, *The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz*, 332.

<sup>422</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 17/114.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 17/163.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, 17/304.

<sup>425</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 274.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid 1/417.

<sup>427</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Al-Mushtabih fī al-Rijāl: Asmā’ihim wa Ansābihim*, ed. Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi, (Cairo: Dar Ihya’ al-Kutub al-Arabiyya, 1962), 1/51.

<sup>428</sup> *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 52/250.

<sup>429</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, 1/416.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Sahl al-Fārisī (n.d).

Abū Mu‘adh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Rizq b. Al-Sijistānī (n.d).<sup>431</sup>

Ja‘far b. Shu‘ayb b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (n.d).<sup>432</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Ibn Ḥibbān spent the final years of his life in Bust where he remained a great attraction to enthusiastic scholars in their quest for mastery of the Prophetic tradition. He died on Friday night, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Shawwal 354/965 at the age of eighty at the *madrasa* he built.<sup>433</sup> Yāqūt said his grave in Bust is well-known and still visited until nowadays.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* 16/93

<sup>432</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* 1/416.

<sup>433</sup> *Al-Ansāb*, 2/208; *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*. 1/415; *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz* 3/920; *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* 16/92; *Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-A‘yān* 176; *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* 7/291; *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya*, 3/133.

<sup>434</sup> *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* 1/419.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE *ṢAḤĪḤ* OF IBN ḤIBBĀN

Chapter three mainly examines the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Ibn Ḥibbān* and provides a summarised translation of the introduction. In order to situate the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and its author within the history of Islam and its magnificent tradition of ḥadīth scholarship, this chapter begins by comparing Ibn Ḥibbān with several of his students, teachers, and early participants of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* network. Subsequently, this chapter will discuss the historical development of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīth collections in general, Ibn Ḥibbān's conditions and technical vocabularies of authentic ḥadīth, and the overall contents of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

#### 3.1 The Originality and Role of *Ṣaḥīḥ* Collections

Before the recognised books were accumulated, the body of ḥadīth had grown remarkably, and serious students of ḥadīth recognised that much of it was fabricated.<sup>435</sup> Siddiqi lists four categories of people which are generally attributed with forged ḥadīth; (1) the heretics (*zanādiqa*), who made chaos by wilfully forging thousands of ḥadīths and propagating them among the Muslim community. (2) The various sectarian preaches at both the Shī'ī and Khārijī ends of the political spectrum. (3) The storytellers (*quṣṣāṣ*) were men who invented

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<sup>435</sup> The question authenticity of the ḥadīth material is of course debated in the Muslim and Western world. Each of these scholars has a different approach and studies different materials, as was discussed generally in the first chapter. In addition, many studies have been conducted determining the nature of the debates about the sources and their reliability. And as Herbert Berg concludes: "Once one accepts the testimony of *isnāds*, there are a plethora of ḥadīths indicating that the transmitters, exegetes, jurists, and historians employed both oral and written means to assure fairly accurate transmission and that this activity was so geographically and temporally widespread as to preclude collusion. Consequently, ḥadīths are largely authentic and their *isnāds* can be trusted. On the other hand, if the evidence claiming to come from the first century and a half of Islam is irrelevant. Virtually everything we know of that period, whether historical, legal, exegetical, and so forth, comes to us in the form of ḥadīths or texts with *isnāds*. The only avenue through which this material can be examined is literary analysis. It is only the *matns* and texts themselves that can yield reliable information of their chronology and provenance. But to what can the *matns* and texts be compared to give us this information? In other words, what are our external reference points that allow us to judge chronology and provenance? The answer is to these questions is the theory or assumptions one has adopted." See Herbert Berg, "Competing Paradigms in the Study of Islamic Origin: Qur'ān 15:89-91 and the value of *isnāds*" in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), pp. 259-290; See also Gautier Juynboll, "(Re)appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science," *Islamic Law and Society* (2001:8.3), pp. 303-349; Herbert Berg. *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (London: Curzon Press, 1999); Harald Motzki, "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article" in Herbert Berg, *Method and Theory*, pp. 211-57; and Herbert Berg (ed.). *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*; Robert Hoyland, "History, Fiction, and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam," in Julia Bray (ed.). *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 16-46; John Burton "Qur'an and Sunnah, a Case of Cultural Disjunction," in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory*, pp. 137-157; N. J. Coulson "European Criticism of Hadith Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, pp. 317-321.

the most extraordinary ḥadīth to which they attached seemingly impeccable *isnāds*, their purpose being to astonish the common people and receive payment for their stories. (4) The students of ḥadīth themselves and they were perhaps the most dangerous category of ḥadīth forgers, as asserted by Siddiqi.<sup>436</sup> The fact that different types of people invented ḥadīths shows how important ḥadīth had become.<sup>437</sup> Siddiqi adds, “thanks to the precision and rigour of the elite of ḥadīth scholars, then, the vital core of the ḥadīth literature was preserved intact.”<sup>438</sup> And as Abbott concludes:

Deliberate tampering with either the content or the *isnāds* of the Prophet’s Tradition, as distinct from the sayings and deeds of the Companions and Successors, may have passed undetected by ordinary transmitters, but not by the aggregate of the ever-watchful, basically honest, and aggressively outspoken master traditionists and ḥadīth critics.<sup>439</sup>

As mentioned in the first chapter, by the end of the third/beginning tenth century a large amount of ḥadīth collections had been produced, six of which have since then been regarded as being especially authoritative and are known as *Kutub al-Sitta*.<sup>440</sup> The most authoritative were considered to be the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, followed in importance by the *Sunan* works of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah. Studies by Siddiqi and Brown have tended to answer the question about dating the canonization of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* since Goldziher raised the issue

We cannot establish with chronological accuracy the date which brought the *consensus publicus* for the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* to maturity or the date when favour of the *ijmā’* was extended to the ‘six books’.<sup>441</sup>

According to Siddiqi and Brown, this recognition started in the middle of the fourth/tenth century, when Sa’īd b. al-Sakan (d. 353/964) and Ibn Manda (d. 395/1004-5) declared the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, and the two *Sunans* of Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā’ī were the foundations of Islam.<sup>442</sup> However, some scholars did not agree about the equal recognition of this book and had varying opinions on which books constituted the canon. Ibn al-Ṣalah speaks of five basic works, excluding Ibn Mājah. Later, al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) who edited the work of Ibn al-Ṣalah, also recognizes ‘five books’ (*al-kutub al-khamsa*) and deliberately

<sup>436</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 33-35.

<sup>437</sup> James Brown, “Ḥadīth” in *EI2*, 3/24.

<sup>438</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 38.

<sup>439</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri. Vol II*, 132.

<sup>440</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, (Chicago: The University Chicago Press, 1979), 63.

<sup>441</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien) vol. II*, ed. S. M. Stern, trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, (State University of New York Press, 1971), 240.

<sup>442</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 73.

places Ibn Mājah's *Sunan* on the same plane as the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal.<sup>443</sup> We also come across with the recognition such as 'the relied-upon books', 'the Four Books', 'the Ten Books', 'the Authentic Collections' and several others. Yet among these books the position of al-Bukhārī and Muslim was always incomparable.

In general, the *Ṣaḥīḥs* contain biographical material and Quran commentary in addition to details of religious observance, law, commerce, and aspect of public and private behaviour which are the main interest of the *Sunan* works. The corpus of ḥadīth provides details to regulate all aspects of life in this world and to prepare people for the next.<sup>444</sup> Al-Bukhārī is famously acknowledged as the founder of "*Ṣaḥīḥ* movement" and its first author. It took him sixteen years of ḥadīth criticism to produce his famous collection to which he contributed significantly, and thus was able to extract from his material 6000 authentic ḥadīth.<sup>445</sup> His student, Muslim, collates 12000 ḥadīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* including 4000 repetitions, and is dedicated to ḥadīth alone, unburdened with legal notes, and divided into 54 chapters with titles such as faith, purity, and prayer.<sup>446</sup> Muslim revealed serious consideration over would-be ḥadīth scholars who transmitted material of dubious nature to the exclusion of the well-known and well-authenticated ḥadīths. They yield this type of material to the common people when in fact it is the ḥadīth scholars' duty to leave the common people with trustworthy ḥadīth only.<sup>447</sup> Muslim wrote his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in response to what he felt was the laxity and misplaced priorities of ḥadīth scholars and transmitters as he states:

If the matter is such as we have described it, then it is more appropriate for them (sc. the common people) to approach of the ḥadīth material the small quantity that is authentic than to compile the weak. Only for those experts who are blessed with a certain alertness and knowledge of factors that modify the state of a ḥadīth it is hoped that extensive dealing with this material and [even] the compilation of reiterations will prove to be beneficial.<sup>448</sup>

With the *Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan* movement, the ḥadīth tradition had reached a new landmark. Their works looked both to reject many aspects of the culture of ḥadīth transmission and to offer their works as the preeminent ḥadīth references for legal scholars. On that account, al-Bukhārī's and Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* met with repudiation among important elements of the ḥadīth

<sup>443</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 243.

<sup>444</sup> James Brown, "Ḥadīth" in *EI2*, 3/24.

<sup>445</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, "Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth," 274-275.

<sup>446</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, "Ḥadīth Literature," 274-275.

<sup>447</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muḥammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 34.

<sup>448</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, "Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, translated and annotated with an excursus on the chronology of *fitna* and *bid'a*" in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5, (Jerusalem, 1984), 266.

scholar community.<sup>449</sup> For instance, Abū Zur‘a al-Rāzī and his colleagues in Rayy argue a collection limited to purely authentic ḥadīths unnecessarily delimited the potential application of the Prophet’s sunna in Muslim life and debate.<sup>450</sup> Ibn Abi Ḥātim identifies the pinnacle of the ḥadīth tradition with the greatest generation of Ibn Ḥanbal and ignores the existence of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* movement.<sup>451</sup> In *Kitab al-Tatabbu‘*, al-Dāraqutnī scrutinizes the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and reveals weakness in 78 ḥadīth in al-Bukhārī, 100 in Muslim and 32 listed in both, on account of adverse points in the *matn* or *isnād*.<sup>452</sup> Short while ago, some scholars such as Ibn ‘Uthaymīn,<sup>453</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī<sup>454</sup> and others undertake to question some of the collections’ contents.<sup>455</sup>

Notwithstanding, according to Brown, at least three early cities namely Baghdad, Jurjan and Nishapur where the ‘*Ṣaḥīḥayn* Network’ circulated in the fourth/tenth century.<sup>456</sup> Baghdad inherited the study of al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s collections from both Jurjan and Nishapur. For Jurjan, it constituted an important centre of ḥadīth study in its own right during the mid-fourth/tenth century. More particularly, it was home to three friends who developed a stronghold of academic interest in al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. We have already mentioned, ‘Abd Allāh Abū Aḥmad Ibn ‘Adī (d. 365/975-76) who gained renown for his voluminous biographical dictionaries on ḥadīth transmitters’ criticism, *al-Kāmil fī Du‘afā’ al-Rijāl*. He

<sup>449</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 98.

<sup>450</sup> They raise three objections to Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. First, they decry it as impertinent glory-seeking. Second, they disagree with Muslim’s judgement concerning the reliability of some transmitters, arguing that his criteria are flawed and subjective. Finally, they worry that producing a *Ṣaḥīḥ* compilation could hinder the use of other ḥadīths that would be considered lacklustre in comparison. See Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 93.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>452</sup> Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rauf, “Ḥadīth Literature,” 285; However, according to Jonathan Brown, al-Dāraqutnī criticism never intended to alter the theological, ritual, or legal material of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* rather he clearly deemed them seminal embodiments of the Prophet’s Sunna. His objections to certain aspects of al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s compilations through specific methodological developments within Ḥadīth Sciences between third/ninth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. See Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-Hadith Canon, al-Dāraqutnī’s adjustments of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*”, in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15:1 (2004), 1-37.

<sup>453</sup> Muḥammad b. Ṣaliḥ b. ‘Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-Bayqūniyya fī Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīth*, ed. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Julaymī (Cairo: Maktaba al-Sunna, 1995), 24.

<sup>454</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imam al-Bukhārī*, 6 vols., (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1978).

<sup>455</sup> For example, the ḥadīth “Sacrifice only a mature cow, unless it is difficult for you, in which case sacrifice a ram.” Al-Albānī’s method of determining the authenticity or lack thereof of a particular ḥadīth is based largely upon the analysis of the *isnād*, using information found in the biographical dictionaries. Al-Albānī argues that this ḥadīth is weak by virtue of the fact that one of its transmitters is Abū al-Zubayr. Al-Albānī argues that Abū al-Zubayr’s transmission from Jabir is interrupted (*ghayr muttasil*) on the grounds that (1) ḥadīth critics label Abū Zubayr as a *mudallis*, i.e., person who suppressed faults in *isnād*; (2) and he did not explicitly declare whether or not he heard the ḥadīth directly from Jabir, but rather used the term “‘an” (on the authority of). Hence, in the case of Abū al-Zubayr, al-Albānī’s method leads to the result that we must question the historicity of at least 125 of his ḥadīths in Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* as Kamruddin Amin argued. See Kamaruddin Amin, “Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī on Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*: A Critical Study of His Method”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11 no. 2 (2004), 149/176.

<sup>456</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 124.



also served as a significant source on al-Bukhārī's life and as an important transmitter of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* from al-Firabrī (d. 320/932) in Jurjan. His colleague Abū Bakr al-Isma'īlī (d. 371/981-2) composed *mustakhraj* which remained an indispensable reference for students and scholars of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, even late ones such as Ibn Ḥajar. Another, the last scholar, Abū Ahmad Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ghiṭrīfī (d. 377/987-8) also composed a *mustakhraj* of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>457</sup>

As can be seen in this era, ḥadīth scholars began acknowledging at the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* not as an intimidation of the living transmission of the Prophet's sunna but rather as ways and means to express their personal association to his authority and interpreting his instilling knowledge according to their own method. Ḥadīth scholars began using the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and the methods of their authors as templates for their own ḥadīth collections. For these *mustakhraj* books, each of the ḥadīths in the template book the author would use his own narration of the ḥadīth for, with the *isnād* extending from him back to the Prophet. *Isnāds* in these *mustakhraj* would customarily side with the *isnāds* of the template collection at the teacher of the original collector, following the same *isnād* from that point to the Prophet.<sup>458</sup>

Preceding Baghdad and Jurjan, Nishapur was the native soil of the *mustakhraj* genre and it was in this municipality that the genre blossomed.<sup>459</sup> Nishapur scholars crafted *mustakhrajs* of Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan*, al-Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'* and Ibn Khuzayma's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>460</sup> Nishapur, along with Merv, Herat and Balkh was one of great cities of Greater Khurasan and one of the greatest cities in the middle ages. Richard Bulliet scrutinizes the history of Nishapur in fourth/tenth century and concludes that the city's intellectual landscape was sharply divided between the Ḥanafī school, with its strong ties to Mu'tazilite doctrine, and the ḥadīth scholars, who generally identified with the teachings of al-Shāfi'ī.<sup>461</sup> Other school had small numbers of adherents in the city, notably the Malikīs, Zahirīs, and Ḥanbalīs, but they played no known part in the Ḥanafī-Shāfi'ī struggle.<sup>462</sup>

The emergence of Shāfi'ī's school in the fourth/tenth century manifested itself most apparently through the teachings of specific individuals with strong attachments to the legacy of the founder.<sup>463</sup> At the beginning, the learning of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence was

<sup>457</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 129.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid, 124-125.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Richard Bulliet, *The Patrician of Nishapur*, 36.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>463</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 139.

organized as a regular course of study under one teacher, then like the gathering of ḥadīth reports from number of teachers, the more the better. Later a course of study led to the production of a *ta'liqa* (notebook), describing the juridical opinion chosen by the Shāfi'ī school.<sup>464</sup> The nascent school extended out from these individuals, whom Melchert refers to as “local chiefs”, through teacher/student relationship and through the study of formative texts.<sup>465</sup>

Al-Subkī has entries for some fifty Khurasānī Shāfi'ī jurisprudence.<sup>466</sup> Almost all the names derived from al-Ḥakim al-Naysabūrī's *Tārīkh*, and evidently represents Shāfi'īyya of the old school; that is, men who represented themselves as *ahl al-ḥadīth* and collected their jurisprudence in the old style, much as students of ḥadīth collected ḥadīth.<sup>467</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ repeatedly reminds us that “of *ahl al-ḥadīth*” in Khurasan, means “*Shāfi'ī*”.<sup>468</sup> At the heart of the Shāfi'ī pedagogical and textual tradition were his prominent students, al-Rabi' and al-Muzanī. Their student Muḥammad b. Ishāq Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923) became a stronghold of the Shāfi'ī tradition in his native Nishapur.<sup>469</sup> When the Samanids took over Nishapur from the Saffarids in 286/899, they did not appoint a qadi from Bukhara or some other part of their territory. Instead the Samanid amir asked Ibn Khuzayma, who was widely known “*imām* of the *imāms*”, to choose a qāḍi for him.<sup>470</sup> Al-Ḥakim al-Naysabūrī describes Ibn Khuzayma as “the foremost [scholar] by agreement of all of his age,” an authority on the teachings of al-Shāfi'ī and a source of religious rulings (*fatwas*).<sup>471</sup>

However, according to Melchert, Ibn Khuzaymah's comment illuminates his Shāfi'īsm, evidently a matter of theology more than jurisprudence.<sup>472</sup> Abū Sa'īd al-Sam'ānī

<sup>464</sup> Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E.*, 87.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-Kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥalw, (Fayṣal 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964). See also Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E.*, 98.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law*, 98.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>470</sup> Richard Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, 62.

<sup>471</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 125.

<sup>472</sup> Christopher Melchert also suggests ḥadīth scholars of Khurasan needs much further study and he ventures to propose of two reasons why it must have faltered. On the theological plane, it must have suffered repeated embarrassments before attacks from the Ḥanafī Mu'tazilah. On the juridical plane, it must have been increasingly difficult to occlude all forms of *taqlīd*, and also to maintain the superiority of picking up one's Shāfi'īsm piecemeal from shaykhs in Mecca and Egypt over learning it from one authoritative teacher at home. See Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E.*, 98.

tells us that Ibn Ḥibbān learnt and established jurisprudence from Ibn Khuzayma.<sup>473</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān also was included in the fifty Khurasānī Shāfi'ī Jurisprudence and praises his teacher:

He [Ibn Khuzayma] – May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him – was one of the pinnacles of this life in various fields of knowledge, jurisprudence, memorization, compiling and concluding rulings from the texts. He excelled to the level that he was able to narrate *sunan* aḥādīth with chains that none of the expert leaders knew before him, while also being perfect in his knowledge and exceedingly righteous until the day he passed away, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him.<sup>474</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān also said: I saw no one on the surface of the earth who produced the *sunan*, the authentic wording of these narrations, and the additions of such narrations; it was as if (all) the *sunan* aḥādīth were present before his eyes except for Muḥammad b. Ishāq Ibn Khuzayma.<sup>475</sup>

Ibn Khuzayma who both studied with and transmitted ḥadīths to al-Bukhārī and Muslim compiled a *Ṣaḥīḥ* work entitled *Mukhtaṣar al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ 'an al-Nabī* (The Abridged Abridgement of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Musnad* from the Prophet).<sup>476</sup> And this work later become known as *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma*. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī is among the scholars who argues that *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma* deserves mention alongside the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* as he sets up a clear requirement for authenticity on the first page of his work.<sup>477</sup> Ibn Khuzayma says that this book contains material

That an upright (*ʿadl*) transmitter narrates from another upstanding transmitter continuously to [the Prophet] peace be upon him without any break in the *isnād* nor any impugning (*jarḥ*) of the reports' transmitters.<sup>478</sup>

Nevertheless, Brown asserts Ibn Khuzayma's *Ṣaḥīḥ* never attracted the scholarly interest heaped on the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, and its exclusion from the Six Canonical Books seems to be the result of his failure to inspire the same confidence in the community that canonized al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The reason why the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, not other canonical ḥadīth books, played such a salient role in ritual and narrative grew out of the unique status they had achieved by the beginning of fourth/tenth century. The *Ṣaḥīḥayn* would serve as the authoritative reference for "non-specialist" after an increasing separation between jurists and

<sup>473</sup> Ibn Salah, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā' al-Shāfi'īyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, 1992), 116.

<sup>474</sup> *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, 9/156.

<sup>475</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ma'rifāt al-Majrūhīn wa al-Dhu'afā' min al-Muḥaddithīn*, ed. 'Azīz Baygh Nawshabandī al-Qadīrī, (Hyderabad, 1970), 1/93. See also Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/372.

<sup>476</sup> Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma*, ed. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami, (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2003), 22.

<sup>477</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmi' li-ikhtilāf al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmi'*, 2/185.

<sup>478</sup> Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma*, 45.

ḥadīth scholars.<sup>479</sup> For example, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī al-Shirāzī (d. 476/1083) suggests a *muftī* should rely on “the *imāms* of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*” and should be exempted from mastering the ḥadīth criticism.<sup>480</sup> A former Ḥanafī, Abū Muẓaffar al-Sam‘ānī (d. 489/1095-6) list “the relied-upon books” for such purposes as the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī al-Nasā’ī, the *Mustakhraj* of Abū ‘Awāna and finally the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Abū ‘Abbās al-Daghūlī and Ibn Ḥibbān.<sup>481</sup>

And al-Bukhārī and Muslim were not just used to prove the authenticity of ḥadīth, but also to authoritatively shape the study of ḥadīth. Thus the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* are canonical in that they are standards that can be employed to set the rules of genre. Abū Bakr al-Ḥāzimī (d. 584/1188-9) characterizes Bukhārī as the best of his era in ḥadīth collection and criticism.<sup>482</sup> Considerably Ibn al-Ṣalah describes books of Bukhārī and Muslim are the soundest books after the august book of God [that is, the Quran].<sup>483</sup> Ibn Taymiyya states that not even Ibn Khuzayma or Ibn Ḥibbān come nearer al-Bukhārī’s level of proficiency.<sup>484</sup>

Presumably for these reasons, Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* conveys the impression more to have been the ‘victim’ of the accident of history than a requirement of theory. In principal there can be any number of ḥadīth collections at any given time. And in the first four centuries of the *hijra*, there was, according to standard view, a plethora of ḥadīth collections. Muḥammad al-Qī’ī states that Ibn Ḥibbān narrated from unknown transmitters (*majāḥil*).<sup>485</sup> This assessment of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* commenced as early as the work of his own student, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Yet as Brown’s review of transmitter studies has shown, the earliest work on al-Bukhārī’s teachers freely admits that at least one of his sources in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was also unknown. It was only after another two generations of study that Abu Nasr Ahmad al-Kalābādhī (d. 398/1008) discovered the identity of this transmitter and produced the most comprehensive listing of all al-Bukhārī’s transmitters.<sup>486</sup> He further argues

Had his [Ibn Ḥibbān] *Ṣaḥīḥ* received the generations of scholarly attention devoted to the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* during the long fourth century, it too might have been purged of

<sup>479</sup> George Makdisi, “Muslim Institution of Learning in Eleventh Century Baghdad,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24, no. 1 (1961): 10-11. Jonathan Brown, *Canonical*, 245.

<sup>480</sup> Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *Sharḥ al-Luma’*, ed. ‘Abd al-Majīd Turkī, (Beirut: Dār al-Ghrb al-Islāmī, 1988), 2/1033-4.

<sup>481</sup> Abū Muẓaffar al-Sam‘ānī, *Qawāṭi’ al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Tawba, 1998), 2/499-500; See also Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 242

<sup>482</sup> Abū Bakr al-Ḥāzimī, *Shurūṭ al-‘Imma al-Khamsa*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1984). 43.

<sup>483</sup> Ibn Ṣalah, *Kitāb Ma’rifat Anwā’ ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth*, trans. Eerik Dickinson, 8.

<sup>484</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, ed. ‘Āmir al-Jazār and Anwar al-Bāz, (Mansura: Dār al-Wafā’, 2005), 1/183.

<sup>485</sup> Muḥammad al-Qī’ī, *Qānun al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, (Cairo: Dār al-Baṣā’ir, 2004), 145.

<sup>486</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 122.

unknown transmitters, in which case al-Ḥākim would have read it with glowing approval. Indeed, later scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) and Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī (d. 806/1404) did champion Ibn Ḥibbān’s work as an exceptional source for authentic ḥadīth.<sup>487</sup>

### 3.2 The Transmission of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>488</sup>

Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Kattānī (d. 1345/1927) account of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* remains in its entirety five volumes as of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.<sup>489</sup> This great Moroccan ḥadīth scholar asserts “it has been said that Ibn Ḥibbān, after Ibn Khuzayma, authored the most authentic ḥadīth collection, after *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.”<sup>490</sup> And perhaps *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* become the fourth most authentic ḥadīth collection in al-Kattānī’s views. Earlier before al-Kattānī, al-Suyūṭī indicates that *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma* was the most authentic collection after *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, followed by *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* which, in turn, was more greater than *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* by al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī.<sup>491</sup>

According to Ibn ‘Asākir, Ibn Ḥibbān wrote his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tārīkh*, and *al-Du‘āfā’* and many others, while he was teaching in Samarqand.<sup>492</sup> The actual name of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection is *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’*, and is largely cited by al-Dhahabī, al-Haythamī, al-‘Irāqī, Ibn Balabān, Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Suyūṭī, and many others.<sup>493</sup> However, it is often abbreviated to *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*. Ibn Balabān (d. 739/1339)<sup>494</sup> in his derivative work of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* regularly cites it as *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’*. Ibn Balabān suggests, similar to Ibn Khuzayma steps, he names after his book “*al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’ min ghayr*

<sup>487</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>488</sup> It should be noted that Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* has not survived in its original form and its present arrangement by legal topic is the work of a later hand. The principal contemporary studies (to my knowledge) are *al-Iḥsān bi Tārīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt, *Al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma‘lūmāt, *Mawārid al-Ḥamīd*, ed. Ḥusayn Sālim Asad al-Dārānī, *al-Ta‘liqāt al-Ḥisan ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, al-Albānī. On the other hand, their introductions are substantial comprising mostly about Ibn Ḥibbān in general. The authenticity of ḥadīth in Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* is also scrutinized by three of them.

<sup>489</sup> Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Kattānī, *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrifa li-bayān Mashhūr Kutub al-Sunna al-Mushrifa*, ed. Muḥammad al-Muntaṣir, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islamiyya, 1993), 20.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>491</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī*, (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1431H), 1/183-184.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz*, 3/921 and *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 16/94. *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 11.

<sup>494</sup> Al-Amīr ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Abu al-Hasan ‘Alī b. Balabān b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Fārisī al-Misrī was born in 675/. At first glance, we know that he prefers to simplify books; among that of *Mu‘jam al-Tabrānī*, *Talkhīṣ al-Jāmi‘ al-Kabīr fī al-Furū‘* of Muḥammad b. ‘Ibād al-Khalafī al-Hanafī (d. 652), *al-Ilmām* of Ibn Daqīq al-‘Id and many others. He died in Egypt, 9<sup>th</sup> of Shawwal 739/1338.

*wujūd qaṭʿ fī sanadihā walā thubūt jarḥ fī nāqilihā.*” Aḥmad Shākir indicates that this is the title written in the manuscript of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya.<sup>495</sup>

Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwāʿ* and it is scattered in various places, including Istanbul, Cairo, Berlin, as well as Madīnah.<sup>496</sup> Neither *GAL* nor *GAS* mention whether these manuscripts are complete or not. Later, both add several more manuscripts that of derivative works from *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*. Sezgin also mentions the first standard edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* was first printed in one volume, in Egypt in 1952.<sup>497</sup> This was Aḥmad Shākir’s edition, completing the first volume before his death. In his introduction, Shākir discusses in length the available manuscripts including the name, date of composition, scribes or copyists, and the transmission of the book.<sup>498</sup> Discussing one of the manuscripts, he indicates that under the book title the transmission was written as

From the composition of *Shaykh al-Islām* Master and Custodian of Critics Abī Hātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad b. Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī, may Allah bestow on His mercy

*riwāya* of Abī al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Zūzanī<sup>499</sup> from him [Ibn Ḥibbān ],

*riwāya* of Abī al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Baḥāʾī<sup>500</sup> from him,

*riwāya* of Abī al-Qāsim Zāhir b. Tāhir b. Muḥammad al-Shaḥḥāmī<sup>501</sup> from him,

*riwāya* of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. Hibat Allāh b. ʿAsākir from him.  
502

Shākir asserts obviously the scribe was one of Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1175) students. He adds, this “book’s *sanad*” belongs to Ibn ʿAsākir, acknowledging that he read (Ibn ʿAsākir used *qaraʾtuhā ʿalā*) the material in 5 volumes over to his teacher, Abū al-Qāsim al-Shaḥḥāmī (d. 533/1138).<sup>503</sup> This Azharī scholar, who died in 1377/1958, completed the first volume of Ibn Balabān’s derivative work of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* by comparing four

<sup>495</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Aḥmad Shākir, 9.

<sup>496</sup> *GAL*, 1/273. *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>497</sup> *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>498</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tarīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, (Egypt: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1952), 22.

<sup>499</sup> Al-Dhahabī mentions Abū al-Ḥasan al-Zūzanī among the transmitters of Ibn Ḥibbān. And he died in 369/979. See Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 26/112; Zūzan is a big town between Herat and Nishapur. And some people called it ‘small Basra’. See al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3/175.

<sup>500</sup> In *al-Muntakhab*, second *ṭabaqāt* under whose name is ʿAlī. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Adīb Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baḥāʾī al-Zūzanī, he is among the expert on philology. He also had known as Abū al-Qaḍī Abī al-Qāsim al-Baḥāʾī. See Al-Ṣayrafī, *Al-Muntakhab min al-Siyāq li-Tārīkh Naysabūr li-l-Fārisī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1989), 382.

<sup>501</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Zāhir b. Tāhir b. Muḥammad al-Shaḥḥāmī al-Naysaburi, *musnid Khurasān*, was born in 446/1054. And he died in Rabīʿ al-Akhīr 533/1138 at Nishapur. See Ibn al-Jawzī 10/79-80; *Tārīkh Ibn Kathīr*, 12/215; *al-Shadharāt*, 4/102.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>503</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tarīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, 24.

manuscripts.<sup>504</sup> Since then several other workings of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* have appeared. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ‘Uthmān edited another two volumes of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which were published by al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya of Madīnah in 1970. However this edition did not include anecdotes or ḥadīth status.<sup>505</sup>

What deserves to be standard editions are those of Kamāl al-Ḥūt in 10 volumes,<sup>506</sup> Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt in 18 volumes (including two volumes of index), al-Albānī in 12 volumes, and Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma‘lūmāt in 8 volumes. They have been indispensable to this study. In addition, their introductions are substantial, comprising mostly about Ibn Ḥibbān in ḥadīth scholarship. The authenticity of ḥadīth in Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* is also scrutinized by all of them. In this case, all of them possessed the derivative manuscript famously known as *al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān)*. Sezgin indicates this complete manuscript is available in 9 volumes in Cairo.<sup>507</sup>

The *Ṣaḥīḥ*, edited by Shu‘ayb and assistants published in 1988 used two main manuscripts which were contained in 9 volumes for the reconstruction of the work as a whole. The first manuscript provides the largest part of the text, volume 1-6, 8, and 9. The second was for the remaining volume 7. Shu‘ayb in his introduction, like a number of others, assumes that political quarrels and religious disputes within the nascent Islamic community brought about the destruction of Ibn Ḥibbān’s works.<sup>508</sup> Meanwhile al-Albānī and assistants give a title *al-Ta‘līqāt al-Hisān ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān: wa Tamyīz Saqīmīhi min Ṣaḥīḥihi wa Shādhidhihi min Maḥfūẓihi* for the edition and published in 2003.<sup>509</sup> Moreover, the latest edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* edited by Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma‘lūmāt<sup>510</sup> discusses in detail the features of the manuscript. To a certain degree, the Markāz compares three earlier printed versions (Kamāl al-Ḥūt, Shu‘ayb, and al-Albānī) and points out the slight difference in the text and numbering between them. According to the Markāz, however no dissimilarity of *matn* occurred between Shu‘ayb and al-Albānī.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, 48. Juynboll furnishes his article with Aḥmad Shākir short biography. See “Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (1892-1958) and His Edition of Ibn Hanbal’s Musnad” in *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith*, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), II.

<sup>505</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt, 1/63.

<sup>506</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1987).

<sup>507</sup> GAS, 1/190.

<sup>508</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt, 1/28. Harald Motzki, “Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey,” *Arabica* T. 52, Fasc. 2 (Apr., 2005), 207.

<sup>509</sup> Muḥammad Nasir al-Din al-Albānī, *al-Ta‘līqāt al-Hisān ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, (Jeddah: Dār Bawazīr, 2003).

<sup>510</sup> *Al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma‘lūmāt, (Cairo: Dār al-Ta‘sil, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, all these editions certainly do not reproduce the original *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*. Ibn Balabān, the great scholar and editor of his time, rearranges the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which he described easy for students to comprehend.<sup>511</sup> Ibn Balabān presents at the end of each of the ḥadīth an index of the original location in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Obviously Ibn Balabān was not alone in adopting this feature, another sort of re-arrangement belong to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Qalīj al-Mughulṭay (d. 762/1361), Ibn Zurayq, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad (d. 803/1400), and Ibn Mulaqqin, ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Andalusī (d. 804/1401).<sup>512</sup> In like manner they rearranged the *Ṣaḥīḥ* according to the topics of jurisprudence leaving out any commentaries or anecdote by them. Perhaps this was because Ibn Ḥibbān’s arrangement is difficult to understand, as professed by al-Suyūṭī.<sup>513</sup> At this point, al-Suyūṭī adds the reason is that Ibn Ḥibbān is an expert on kalām, astronomy and philosophy.<sup>514</sup>

There are sources from which we can gain more insight in to the history of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*; such as the books of *aṭrāf*. *Aṭrāf* is a genre of ḥadīth literature similar to the *mustakhraj*. It is an index of ḥadīth which is organised primarily according to the Companion who narrated the text, but which also focuses on the key components of the text rather than the whole *matn*.<sup>515</sup> Al-Kattānī lists among early scholars to produce an *aṭrāf* of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Khalaf b. Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī (d. 400/1010) and Abū Mas‘ūd Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqī (d. 401/1010-11).<sup>516</sup> Khalaf produces three – or four – volume *aṭrāf* (one volume, seven *juz*’s, of which has survived in manuscript form),<sup>517</sup> while Abū Mas‘ūd’s work exists today in only partial and unpublished form.<sup>518</sup>

Unlike *mustakhraj*, which are organized along the chapter structure of the template book, *aṭrāf* books usually present the ḥadīth according to the Companion at the beginning of the *isnād*.<sup>519</sup> As stated in *Lahz al-Alḥāz*, Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī (d. 806/1404) composed *Aṭrāf Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* up until sixty category of the third division of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>520</sup> He also uses *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* as one of the sources when analysing the ḥadīth that al-Ghazālī had

<sup>511</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma‘lūmāt, 1/232.

<sup>512</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī, *Mawārid al-Zam‘ān ilā Zawā’id Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Ḥusayn Sālim Asad al-Dārānī, (Damascus: Dār al-Thaqāfa al-‘Arabiyya, 1990), 1/49.

<sup>513</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib al-Rāwī*, 1/184.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 105.

<sup>516</sup> Al-Kattānī, *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrifā*, 167-168.

<sup>517</sup> GAS, 1/220.

<sup>518</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 132-133.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>520</sup> Ibn Fahd, *Lahz al-Alḥāz*, (Damascus: al-Qudsī, n.d.), 232. See also his works in GAS, 69/70.



included in his famous *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences).<sup>521</sup> In the meantime, Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī's son-in-law, Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī (d. 807/1404) compiled *al-Mawārid al-Zam'ān ilā Zawā'id Ibn Hibbān*.<sup>522</sup> Although ten years younger than Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī, he became a committed disciple for he traveled together with Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī to many cities in Egypt, and also to Makkah to perform pilgrimage, Madīna, Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo and other places.<sup>523</sup> His *Mawārid* represented those ḥadīth included in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that do not appear in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. In other words, this work listed ḥadīth that Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī believed al-Bukhārī and Muslim should have included in their collections.

In the same way of ḥadīth scholars, Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī presents his detailed records of transmission of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the introduction. According to the information, he possessed two transmissions which went back to:

1. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Khalīl al-Makkī (d. 777/1375) and Abū 'Umar 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Jamā'a al-Kinānī (d. 767/1365) ← Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabarī (d. 722/1322) ← Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Faḍl al-Mursī (d. 655/1257) ← Abū Rūḥ 'Abd al-Mu'īz b. Muḥammad al-Harawī (d. 618/1221) ← Tamīm b. Abī Sa'īd al-Jurjānī (d. 531/1136) ← Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baḥḥā'ī ← Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Harun al-Zūzanī ← Abū Hatim Muḥammad b. Hibbān al-Tamīmī al-Bustī.
2. Ibn Jamā'a ← Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Hibat Allah b. 'Asākir (d. 699/1299) ← Abū Rūḥ 'Abd al-Mu'īz b. Muḥammad al-Harawī ← Tamīm b. Abī Sa'īd al-Jurjānī ← Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baḥḥā'ī ← Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Harun al-Zūzanī ← Abū Hatim Muḥammad b. Hibbān al-Tamimi al-Busti.

<sup>521</sup> Zayn al-Dīn Al-'Irāqī, *Takhrīj Ahādīth Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn (li-l-'Irāqī wa Ibn al-Subkī wa al-Zubaydī)*, ed. Abī 'Abd Allāh Mahmūd b. Muḥammad al-Haddād, (Riyadh: Dār al-'Āṣima, 1987), 1012.

<sup>522</sup> *Al-Mawārid al-Zam'ān* has been edited by Ḥusayn Sālim Asad al-Dārānī published in 1990 and used two manuscripts that of Madinah and Sind. See Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī, *Mawārid al-Zam'ān ilā Zawā'id Ibn Hibbān*, ed. Ḥusayn Sālim Asad al-Dārānī, (Damascus: Dār al-Thaqāfa al-'Arabiyya, 1990), 78-79.

<sup>523</sup> Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man dhahab*, ed. 'Abd al-Qadīr al-Arna'ūt and Maḥmūd al-Arna'ūt, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1993), 105. Al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāz*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1983), 543-546.

The former, Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī said that he read back the *Ṣaḥīḥ* to ‘Abd Allāh al-Makkī who settled in Cairo, using *bi-qirā’ati ‘alāyhi*.<sup>524</sup> And the latter transmission through Ibn Jamā‘ah covers a long period with few links, a type considered more valuable.<sup>525</sup> Al-Haythamī got it when he was listening to a reading by Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī to Ibn Jamā‘a. As for another contemporary study of this version, al-Albānī published *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Da‘īf Mawārid al-Zam‘ān*, the principal aim of which was to distinguish what he deemed weak ḥadīths from the *Mawārid*.

And another *aṭrāf* for the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is that of “the ten books” by Nūr al-Dīn’s al-Haythamī student which contains an extremely long index of transmitters. Ibn Ḥajar names these ten volumes *Ithāf al-Mahara bi-l-Fawā'id al-Mubtakira min Aṭrāf al-‘Ashara*.<sup>526</sup> He adopts *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān* as an exercise in tracing ḥadīth through the usual channels back to the oldest collections. The title refers to ten books, but Ibn Ḥajar used the *Sunan* of al-Dāraquṭni as an eleventh volume to supply missing parts of Ibn Khuzayma’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Ibn Ḥajar composed an *Ithāf al-Mahara* that included the individual texts of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*, along with ḥadīth from *Sunan* of al-Dārimī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzayma, *al-Muntaqā* of Ibn al-Jārud, *Mustakhraj* of Abī ‘Awāna, *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim, *Muwaṭṭā* of Mālik, *Musnad* of al-Shāfi‘ī, *Musnad* of Aḥmad and *Sharḥ Ma‘ānī al-Āthār* of al-Ṭaḥāwī.

Just as al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341)<sup>527</sup> had done a century earlier for ḥadīth in the Six Books with *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf*,<sup>528</sup> Ibn Ḥajar isolates ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* by Companion and Successor. This arrangement makes it easier to compare different transmissions of effectively the same ḥadīth report.<sup>529</sup> The individual *musnads* comprise complete *isnāds* but do not contain the complete *matns* supported by these *isnāds*. Only the *ṭaraf* (plural *aṭrāf*), a technical term which indicates the “gist” or an epitomising phrase of each *matn*, precedes the sometime substantial list of names from the *isnād* as it occurs in the various collections.

<sup>524</sup> Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī, *Mawārid al-Zam‘ān ila Zawaid Ibn Hibbān*, 1/90.

<sup>525</sup> See footnote no. 306 on *isnād ‘ālī*.

<sup>526</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Ithāf al-Mahara bi-l-Fawā'id al-Mubtakira min Aṭrāf al-‘Ashara*, ed. Markāz Khidmāt al-Sunna wa al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya, (Madinah: Islamic University of Madinah, 1415H), 1/58.

<sup>527</sup> For more than 23 years, up to his death, al-Mizzī was professor for this subject at the famous Dār al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyya founded, in 630/1233, by the Ayubide sultan al-Mālik al-Ashrāf Muzaḥḥar al-Dīn in Damascus, at the foot of the Jabal Qasyun. He was pupil of al-Nawāwī, colleague of Ibn Taymiyya, father-in-law of Ibn Kathīr, teacher of al-Dhahabī, Birzalī, Safadī, and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī. His tomb in Damascus is near that of Ibn Taymiyya. See Josef Van Ess, “Review of *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf bi-Ma‘rifat al-Aṭrāf*,” in *Oriens*, vol. 20 (1967), pp. 318-319.

<sup>528</sup> *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf bi-Ma‘rifat al-Aṭrāf* is available in the complete edition of ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Sharaf al-Dīn. This work contains the *musnads* of all those first generation transmitters, the Companions of the Prophet, arranged in alphabetical order, who, after the Prophet, had the *isnads* of the “Six Canonical Books” and a few other minor collections. See Juynboll, *EI2*, 7/213.

<sup>529</sup> Christopher Melchert, “The Musnad of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books” in *Der Islam* 82 (2005), 32-51.

Within each Companion's *musnad* the material is presented in the alphabetical order of the third and sometimes fourth links in the *isnāds*. For the record, the abbreviation used in *Ithāf al-Mahara* for the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* is *ḥb*.

This Egyptian scholar, who died in 852/1449, possessed the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in two transmissions. Ibn Ḥajar got the first three volumes from Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Tanūkhī by reading it over to him, using *qara' tu*. And the last two volumes were received by Ibn Ḥajar from Khadīja bt. Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq b. Sulṭān, using *sami' tu*. Both Ibrāhīm and Khadīja got it from Abī 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zarrād, using *'an*. Abī 'Abd Allāh got it from al-Hāfiẓ Abū 'Alī al-Bakrī from Abū Rūḥ 'Abd al-Mu'iz b. Muḥammad al-Harawī (d. 618/1221) from Tamīm b. Abī Sa'īd al-Jurjānī (d. 531/1136) from Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baḥḥā'ī al-Zūzanī from Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-Zūzanī from Abū Ḥatīm Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī al-Bustī, *akhbaranā* being used at each of these stages.<sup>530</sup>

Most importantly the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, like the many existing ḥadīth compilations, was handed down to succeeding generations by chains of authority. In dealing with the transmission, we have been mainly dependent on details given by Ibn Ḥajar, Abū Bakr al-Haythamī, and Ibn 'Asākir. The similarity between the transmissions allows us to conclude that then was a single transmitter of the first and second generation after Ibn Ḥibbān that goes back to Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Zūzanī and Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Baḥḥā'ī al-Zūzanī. Based on the information also we can assume that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was originally contained in 5 volumes.

And the number of ḥadīth reports in the *Ṣaḥīḥ (bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān)* varies less widely in the printed editions. By counting ḥadīth reports differently, particularly where variant *asānid* are presented one after another, different editions come up with slightly different numbers: Shu'ayb's edition counts 7491, Al-Albānī's edition counts 7448, while the recent edition of Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Ma'lūmāt counts 7535. Ḥusayn Sālim (editor of Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī's *al-Mawārid*) has similar estimation with al-Albānī that of 7448. It suggests that Ibn Ḥibbān shared with al-Bukhārī and Muslim or one of them at 4801. And this leaves the number of *zawā'id* (additional ḥadīth reports) for Ibn Ḥibbān alone at 2647.<sup>531</sup>

### 3.3 The Corpora in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and their Common Features

<sup>530</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Ithāf al-Mahara bi-l-Fawā'id al-Mubtakira min Aṭrāf al-'Ashara*, 1/164.

<sup>531</sup> *Mawārid al-Zam'ān*, 74.

Before analysing the *Ṣaḥīḥ*'s contents, it is more useful to understand what parts and how Ibn Balabān reorganized the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. In the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Balabān justifies the rearrangement of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān in his time on the basis of the needs of students.<sup>532</sup> The advantage of arrangement by topic that it makes much easier to look up a given ḥadīth report.<sup>533</sup> Practically, most rearrangement works on ḥadīth collections are prefaced by an introduction which typically has technical aspects. The technical matters usually involve the explanation of procedures, those things which the reader should care to know about.<sup>534</sup> Hence Ibn Balabān's introduction to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān can be divided into three main parts.<sup>535</sup> The first part contains a description of Ibn Ḥibbān's biography that includes genealogy, journeys, teachers, students and death.

And to make the case that Ibn Ḥibbān very own introduction is maintained, Ibn Balabān cites and places it in the second part.<sup>536</sup> This part is generally comprised of a list of Ibn Ḥibbān's explanation of purpose, technical terms in ḥadīth science, authentic ḥadīth criterion, polemical issues, the concept of *khavar*, and some aspects of the reliable transmitter. However, much of this part is covered with a section of the legal methodology of Ibn Ḥibbān which runs to forty-four pages in the printed text, as it touches upon principles derived from the ḥadīth. This will be discussed in a subsequent section along with other issues and concepts of Ibn Ḥibbān's introduction.

The third and last part of Ibn Balabān's introduction consists of his new table of contents according to topics within jurisprudence.<sup>537</sup> Prior to establishing the first *kitāb* (book), Ibn Balabān places two chapters within his introduction supported by thirty-two aḥādīth. Both chapters have titles: *Bāb mā jā'a fī-l-ibtidā' bi-ḥamd Allāh Ta'ālā* (Chapter Concerning Praise to Allāh in the Beginning) and *Bāb al-I'tisām bi-l-Sunna wa mā yata'allaq bihā naqlan wa amran wa zajaran* (Chapter on the devotion to the Sunna and what relates to it [concerning] its transmission, order, and rejection). Looking at the contents and chapter placement, it shows that there is not much difference between Ibn Balabān era with that of Ibn Ḥibbān's generation. *Kitāb Bad' al-Waḥy* (The Book of the Beginning of the Revelation) is the very first book encountered when the *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* is opened. Al-

<sup>532</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/95.

<sup>533</sup> Christopher Melchert, "The *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books," 32-51.

<sup>534</sup> Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Ḥadīth Criticism*, 41.

<sup>535</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/96.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid*, 1/100.

<sup>537</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/166.

Bukhārī introduces his chapter with a quotation from the Quran (4: 163)<sup>538</sup> and locates the ḥadīth of intention, as the first ḥadīth.<sup>539</sup> Focusing on this theme invites reflection upon Ibn Balabān's placement of two chapters in his introduction.

Coming immediately after the introduction, Ibn Balabān posits the ḥadīth about the arrival of Angel Gabriel in the cave of Hira' together in the first chapter and Book of Revelation. The book has the short title: *Kitāb al-Wahy* (The Book of the Revelation), and includes ten chapters supported by twelve ḥadīths. Next, he arranges the total of the chapters in sixty *kitābs* (books).<sup>540</sup> In the context of the chapter framework, the word *dhikr* (report) is often used as a heading or title. The title of the chapters is meant to indicate the subject-matter and teaching of the ḥadīth they contain. Certain ḥadīth contain material on more than one subject and it is not surprising that they should appear in more than one chapter. Ibn Balabān presents at the end of each of the ḥadīth an index of the original location in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Analysed for style and vocabulary, the contents of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Hibbān unmistakably divides into three idiosyncratic corpora. Before discussing what makes the corpora different, it is necessary to examine their common features, which characterize the book as a whole. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* is built around a core of: (1) chapter titles, (2) ḥadīths, and (3) commentaries. All these corpora are included in a specific framework, in which the ḥadīth are arranged according to their subject-matter. This framework is mainly made up of practical, usually protracted, *tarājim* (chapter titles), containing an abundance of material. Certainly, Ibn Hibbān aims to engrave the opinions of his readers towards his views on the

<sup>538</sup> We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah, and the Prophets after him. The Qur'ān 4:163.

<sup>539</sup> Stephen R. Burge has highlighted the form and structure of Bukhārī's first book i.e. The Book of the Beginning of the Revelation in his article "Reading between the Lines: The Compilation of Ḥadīth and the Authorial Voice", *Arabica* 58 (2011), 168-197.

<sup>540</sup> The *kitāb* is followed by books of the Night Journey (*al-Isrā'*), Knowledge (*al-'Ilm*), Faith (*al-Īmān*), Philanthropy and Excellence (*al-Birr wa al-Iḥsān*), Piety (*al-Raqā'iq*), Purity (*al-Ṭahāra*), Prayer (*Ṣalāh*), Funerals (*al-Janā'iz*), Obligatory Charity Tax (*Zakāt*), Fasting (*Ṣawm*), 13. Pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*), Marriage and Its Ethic (*al-Nikāḥ wa Ādābuh*), Nursing (*al-Raḍā'*), Divorce (*al-Talāq*), Emancipation (*al-'Itq*), Oaths (*al-Aymān*), Vows (*al-Nudhūr*), 20. Criminal Law (*al-Hudūd*),<sup>540</sup> Expeditions (*al-Siyar*), Lost Things (*al-Luqāṭa*), Endowment (*al-Waqf*), Sales (*al-Buyū'*), Transgression (*al-Ḥajr*), Transference (*al-Ḥiwāla*), Collateral (*al-Kifāla*), Judiciary (*al-Qaḍā'*), Witnesses (*al-Shahādāt*), Prosecution (*al-Da'wā*), Peace-making (*al-Ṣulḥ*), Loan (*al-'Ariyā*), Gift (*al-Hiba*), Successor and Life Grant (*al-Ruqbā wa al-'Umrā*), Lease (*al-Ijāra*), Abduction (*al-Ghaṣb*), Pre-emption (*al-Shuf'a*), Agriculture (*al-Muzāra'a*), Revival of Death (*Iḥyā' al-Mawāt*), 40. Meals (*al-At'ima*), Drinks (*al-Ashriba*), Dress and Its Ethic (*al-Libās wa Ādābuh*), Adornment and Balminess (*al-Zīna wa al-Taṭayyub*), Prohibition and Permission (*al-Ḥaẓr wa al-Ibāḥa*), Hunting (*al-Ṣayd*), Slaughters (*al-Dhabā'ih*), Sacrifice (*al-Aḍḥiya*), Mortgage (*al-Rahn*), Criminals (*al-Janāyāt*), Compensation (*al-Diyāt*), Will (*al-Waṣiyya*), Inheritance (*al-Farā'id*), Dream (*Rū'ya*), Medicine (*al-Ṭibb*), Incantation and Amulet (*al-Ruqā' wa al-Tamā'im*), Contagion, Omen, and Optimist (*al-'Adwā wa al-Ṭiyarā wa al-Fa'l*), Rain and Asterism (*al-Anawā' wa al-Nujūm*), Fortune-tellers and Black Magic (*al-Kihāna wa al-Siḥr*), History (*al-Tārikh*).

practical applications of the ḥadīth which he cites. He accomplishes it by his wise legal principles, the divisions, the categories and the *tarājim*, which may be regarded as among the most important characteristic of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>541</sup>

The notion of narrative frame in medieval Arabic literature is very familiar, but here the *tarājim* seeks to place the ḥadīth in a specific milieu. This causes the reader to interpret the ḥadīth included in the *kitāb* in a particular way.<sup>542</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān's *tarājim* can be profitably compared with that of al-Bukhārī, as famously known "Knowledge of al-Bukhārī in his chapter titles."<sup>543</sup> *Tarājim* has been the topic of study for a number of scholars since they show both interest in the jurisprudence and the legal principles of al-Bukhārī. Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī lists nine works solely of *tarājim*, not to mention the discussion of the *tarājim* in commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>544</sup> Hence describing al-Bukhārī's *tarājim*, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rauf says the following

Readers of *Ṣaḥīḥ* with a deep insight will realize that the author had two objectives of writing his book – not one. On the one hand, being himself a great scholar and a leading jurist in his own right, al-Bukhārī sought to make his work a rich fountain of knowledge in all areas of the Islamic religion. Apparently he used the *tarājim* as a convenient and relevant place for expounding his own views or the opinions of others that he supported and wanted to advocate.<sup>545</sup>

Just as *tafsīr* is an attempt to understand the Qur'ān, *tarājim* is Ibn Ḥibbān's attempt to understand the meaning of the ḥadīth. Undoubtedly, the *tarājim* is borne out of the interaction between Ibn Ḥibbān and the ḥadīth, and this is a deeply personal action; it is a reflection of the self that incorporates a number of different elements: what Ibn Ḥibbān has read, his methodology, ideological leanings, aspiration in writing the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and so on. In the manner that Bernard Weiss once put it, it is not possible for Ibn Ḥibbān to derive knowledge from ḥadīth without the prior knowledge that he takes to ḥadīth, "and this prior knowledge must necessarily have an extrarevelational basis."<sup>546</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān wishes to convey to his readers theological, juridical, or philosophical ideas that must necessarily be

<sup>541</sup> According to one theory, al-Bukhārī first prepared the entire framework of his treatise and only then filled it out with relevant ḥadīth data. See Vardit Tokatly, "The *A'lām al-Ḥadīth* of al-Khaṭṭābī: a commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* or a polemical treatise?" *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001), 53-91.

<sup>542</sup> For a basic idea of frames and semiotic, see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 24-25.

<sup>543</sup> "*Fiqh al-Bukhārī fī tarājimihi*." See Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī al-Muzāhirī, *al-Imām al-Bukhārī: Imām al-Huffāz wa al-Muḥaddithīn*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalām, 1994), 130.

<sup>544</sup> Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī al-Muzāhirī, *al-Imām al-Bukhārī: Imām al-Huffāz wa al-Muḥaddithīn*, 131.

<sup>545</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, *Imām al-Bukhārī and al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (Washington D.C: The Islamic Centre, n.d.), 16.

<sup>546</sup> Bernard Weiss, *The Search for God's Law*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 71-72.

linked to the body of the ḥadīth. As an illustration, Ibn Ḥibbān offers the following *tarjama* about the well-known ḥadīth concerning the five pillars of Islam<sup>547</sup>

*Dhikr al-bayān bi-anna al-Imān wa al-Islām ismān li-ma'nā wāhid* (An account of explanation that *al-Imān* and *al-Islām* are two names for one meaning).<sup>548</sup>

Next, the largest part of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the ḥadīth corpus and its typical feature is to supply *isnād* for a *matn*. There are many terms employed by Ibn Ḥibbān, his teachers and other transmitters to describe the transmission of ḥadīth. For Ibn Ḥibbān, a ḥadīth that is quoted with an *isnād* is introduced by the formula *akhbaranā*.<sup>549</sup> This phrase is distinctive for its inversion of the verb and the subject, as is the consistent use of the verb *akhbara* (among other verbs that could have been used, such as *akhbaranī*, *anba'anā*,<sup>550</sup> *ḥaddathanā*, *annahu samī'a*, *'an*, etc.) This introductory formula must always precede an *isnād*, which in turn is followed by the *matn* of the ḥadīth.<sup>551</sup>

The practise of specifying the *isnād* was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān and is very important, it only because he compiled his works approximately eighty or ninety years after al-Bukhārī and Muslim and thus he was instrumental in preserving the integrity of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Concurrently, comparison of *isnād* was the essential method of third/ninth to fourth/tenth-century ḥadīth criticism. Recording the name of transmitter or his teacher, Ibn Ḥibbān was concerned with their full names, nicknames, paidonymics, and patronymics. However, at times, there are numerous *isnād* when Ibn Ḥibbān represents a transmitter as transmitted amongst members of one family, with or without names. For instance, from father to son, from grandfather to grandson, from uncle to niece, and that were announced on this basis

From Suhayl b. Abī Ṣāliḥ from his father<sup>552</sup>

From Hishām b. 'Urwa from his father<sup>553</sup>

<sup>547</sup> "Islam has been built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, establishing the prayer, paying the obligatory charity, fasting in Ramadan, making the pilgrimage to the House". *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/374.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid, 1/374.

<sup>549</sup> According to A'zami, *akhbaranā* is used to denote learning through a reading by the students to the teacher or by certain man called *qāri*, and other students compared the ḥadīth with their books or only listened attentively. This method was called *'arḍ*. See *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 28.

<sup>550</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/280

<sup>551</sup> For a discussion of narrative form of the *isnād* and the *matn* as a unit, see Daniel Beaumont, "Hard-Boiled: Narrative Discourse in Early Muslim Traditions", *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996), 5-31.

<sup>552</sup> 'An Suhayl b. Abī Ṣāliḥ 'an abīhi. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/361 and 1/379.

<sup>553</sup> 'An Hishām b. 'Urwa 'an abīhi. Ibid, 1/364.

From Mu‘tamir b. Sulaymān from his father<sup>554</sup>

From al-‘Alā’ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from his father<sup>555</sup>

From Zayd b. Sallam from his grandfather<sup>556</sup>

From his uncle Wāsi‘ b. Ḥibbān<sup>557</sup>

Connected with the name, there are some occasions when Ibn Ḥibbān mentions the place where he could have received the ḥadīth. For example

Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismā‘īl informed me in Bust<sup>558</sup>

Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf informed me in Nasā<sup>559</sup>

Aḥmad b. ‘Amr al-Mu‘addal informed me in Wāsiṭ<sup>560</sup>

Furthermore, here are a few examples to show how Ibn Ḥibbān preserves the *isnād* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*; (1) Widely known although the *isnād* is the same, the details or *matn* are different,<sup>561</sup> (2) he includes the profession of the transmitter,<sup>562</sup> (3) he combines the teacher’s name with qualities are known as *al-hāfiẓ* (the guardian) or *al-faqīh* (the legal professor) according to the degree of perfection they have obtained,<sup>563</sup> (4) he usually gives an account of specific places of the teacher, but sometimes these are very wide geographically,<sup>564</sup> (5) he describes the state how the teacher has narrated,<sup>565</sup> (6) he evaluates explicitly the ḥadīth

<sup>554</sup> ‘An Mu‘tamir b. Sulaymān ‘an abīhi. Ibid, 1/397.

<sup>555</sup> ‘An al-‘Alā’ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘an abīhi. Ibid, 1/399.

<sup>556</sup> ‘An Zayd b. Sallam ‘an jaddihi. Ibid, 1/402.

<sup>557</sup> ‘An ‘ammihi Wāsi‘ b. Ḥibbān. Ibid, 4/269.

<sup>558</sup> Akhbarānā Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismā‘īl bi-Bust. Ibid, 1/196.

<sup>559</sup> Akhbarānā Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf bi-Nasā. Ibid, 1/229.

<sup>560</sup> Akhbarānā Aḥmad b. ‘Amr al-Mu‘addal bi-Wāsiṭ, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/253.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid, 1/399 and 1/477.

<sup>562</sup> Fadhakara ‘Āmir qāla, sāmī‘tuhu wa huwa yaqūl, ḥaddathanī ‘Atā’ b. Yasar, wa huwa Qāḍī al-Madīna, Ibid, 1/403.

<sup>563</sup> Akhbarānā Aḥmad b. Yahyā b. Zuhayr al-ḥāfiẓ bi-Tustar, Ibid, 4/391.

Akhbarānā ‘Umar Sa‘īd b. Sinān al-Tā’ī al-Faqīh bi-Manbij, Ibid, 5/29.

Wa Wāsiṭ b. ‘Abd Allāh al-ḥāfiẓ bi-Anṭakiya, Ibid, 4/429.

<sup>564</sup> Akhbarānā Ismā‘īl b. Dāwūd b. Wardān bi-l-Fuṣṭāṭ, Ibid, 1/431

Akhbarānā Ismā‘īl b. Dāwūd b. Wardān bi-Miṣr, Ibid, 1/406

<sup>565</sup> Akhbarānā Muḥammad b. Ishāq min kitābihi, Ibid, 4/298.

Akhbarānā ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hamdāni, Ibid, 4/339.

Akhbarānā Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma, wa katabtuhu min aṣlihi, Ibid, 5/289.



immediately after his teacher's name,<sup>566</sup> (7) and he does occasionally combine two or several of his teachers if the transmitters of his teachers are similar, right back to the Prophet.<sup>567</sup>

In a concise manner, the present study has considered the authority of some 21 teachers of 215 from whom Ibn Ḥibbān transmits. These 21 teachers narrated 6284 ḥadīth out of a total of 7491 ḥadīth which makes up 84 per cent. The most significant of those 6284 is Abū Ya' lā in Mosul who narrates 1174, 18.6 per cent. Thus, the most typical introductory formula is; *akhbaranā Abū Ya' lā* or *akhbaranā Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. al-Muthannā*. And for a total of 3 Jazirah (Mosul, Harran, and Raqqa) teachers Ibn Ḥibbān narrated 1431 ḥadīth, 22.7 per cent of the total.<sup>568</sup> Those 7 connected to Khorasan (Nasā, Nishapur, and Herat) he narrated 2099 ḥadīth, 33.4 per cent, respectively. From 3 Syrian teachers (Ashkelon, Manbij,<sup>569</sup> and Bayt al-Maqdis) teachers, he narrated 1055 ḥadīth, 16.7 per cent. The total of 802 ḥadīth narrated by 2 Iraqi teachers (Baghdad and Basra) represents 12.7 per cent of the 6284. From 2 Khuzestan teachers ('Askar Mukram, Shushtar) he narrated 148 ḥadīth, somewhat around 2.3 per cent. From every one of Sughd (Samarkand) and Jurjān he narrated 589 ḥadīth, 9.3 per cent. However, from 2 teachers of his hometown Sijistan (Bust), he only narrated 160 ḥadīth, 2.5 per cent.

Table 3: Ibn Ḥibbān's Most Frequently Cited Sources<sup>570</sup>

	Name	Death Date	City	Total Reports
1	Abū Ya' lā <sup>571</sup>	307/919	Mosul	1174
2	Abū al-'Abbās al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī <sup>572</sup>	303/915	Nasā	815
3	Abū Khalīfa al-Faḍl al-Jumāhī <sup>573</sup>	305/917	Basra	732

<sup>566</sup> *Akhbaranā Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma bi-khabar gharīb*, Ibid, 4/155.

*Akhbaranā al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān bi-khabar gharīb*, Ibid, 4/510.

<sup>567</sup> *Akhbaranā Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Daghulī wa Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir al-Naysabūrī bi-Makka, wa 'idda*, Ibid, 1/361.

<sup>568</sup> This border region is based on G. Le Strange's *the Land of Eastern Caliphate* map.

<sup>569</sup> Jisr Manbij (Hierapolis) was often counted as of Syria because they lay on the right or western bank of Euphrates, though most authorities count them as belonging to Jazirah. See, G. Le Strange, *The Land of Eastern Caliphate*, 107.

<sup>570</sup> This information is based on al-Arna'ut's introduction. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/12.

<sup>571</sup> *Akhbaranā Abī Ya' lā bi-Mawṣil*. Ibid, 4/421.

<sup>572</sup> For biographies of al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, see *Siyar A' lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/157.

<sup>573</sup> *Akhbaranā al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥubab al-Jumāhī bi-Basra*. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* 1/399. For biographies of al-Faḍl al-Jumāhī, see *Siyar A' lām al-Nubalā'*, 14/7.

4	Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad al-Lakhmī <sup>574</sup>	310/922	Ashkelon	464
5	Abū Muḥammad al-Azdī/Ibn Shīrūya <sup>575</sup>	305/917	Nishapur	463
6	Ibn Bujayr al-Hamdānī <sup>576</sup>	311/923	Samarkand	357
7	Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Maqdisī <sup>577</sup>	313/925	Bayt al-Maqdis	310
8	Ibn Khuzayma	311/923	Nishapur	301
9	Abū Bakr ‘Umar b. Sa‘īd al-Ṭā’ī al-Manbijī <sup>578</sup>	n. a.	Manbij	281
10	Abū Ishāq ‘Imrān b. Mūsā al-Jurjānī <sup>579</sup>	305/917	Jurjan	232
11	Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad al-Thaqafī <sup>580</sup>	313/925	Nishapur	173
12	Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad/Abū ‘Arūba <sup>581</sup>	318/930	Harran	167
13	Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī <sup>582</sup>	301/913	Herat	136
14	Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Sāmī <sup>583</sup>	302/914	Herat	112
15	Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Nasawī <sup>584</sup>	313/925	Nasā	99
16	Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad al-Junayd <sup>585</sup>	347/958	Bust	91
17	Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān <sup>586</sup>	310/922	Raqqā	90

<sup>574</sup> *Akhbaranā Ibn Qutayba al-Lakhmī bi-‘Asqalān*. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/402. For biographies of Muḥammad al-Lakhmī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/292.

<sup>575</sup> For biographies of Ibn Shīrūya, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/66.

<sup>576</sup> For biographies of Ibn Bujayr al-Hamdānī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/402.

<sup>577</sup> *Akhbaranā ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Salm bi-Bayt al-Maqdis*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/173. For biographies of Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Maqdisī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/306.

<sup>578</sup> *Akhbaranā ‘Umar b. Sa‘īd b. Sinān al-Ṭā’ī bi-Manbij*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/146. Abū Bakr ‘Umar b. Sa‘īd al-Ṭā’ī al-Manbijī, 281 Ḥadīth. See *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/290.

<sup>579</sup> For biographies of Abū Ishāq ‘Imrān b. Mūsā, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/136.

<sup>580</sup> *Wa Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, mawlā thaqīf, bi-Naysabūr*. For biographies of Muḥammad b. Ishāq, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/388.

<sup>581</sup> *Akhbaranā Abū ‘Arūba bi-Harrān*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/149. For biographies of Abū ‘Arūba, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/510.

<sup>582</sup> For biographies of Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/113.

<sup>583</sup> For biographies of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Sāmī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/114.

<sup>584</sup> For biographies of Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Nasāwī al-Rayyānī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/433.

<sup>585</sup> *Akhbaranā Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Junayd bi-Bust*. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 5/248. For biographies of Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad al-Junayd, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 16/17-18.

<sup>586</sup> *Akhbaranā al-Qaṭṭān bi-l-Raqqā*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 5/21. For biographies of al-Qaṭṭān, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/286.

18	Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad al-Tustarī <sup>587</sup>	310/922	Shushtar	75
19	‘Abdān ‘Abd Allāh al-Ahwazī <sup>588</sup>	306/918	‘Askar Mukram	73
20	Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad al-Sūfī <sup>589</sup>	306/918	Baghdad	70
21	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr al-Bushtī	300/912	Bust	69

The principal evidence is how his teachers are identified in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*’s *isnād* and biographical dictionaries. Identifications most often take the form *akhbaranā Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf bi-Nasā* (Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Yūsuf informed me in Nasā), *wa qad haddatha bi-miṣr* (he may have narrated in Egypt), *aḥad kubarā’ Naysabūr* (one of Nishapur’s Greats) *muḥaddith ma warā’ al-nahr* (Transoxiana Ḥadīth Scholar), *fulān al-Kūfī* (he the Kufan), and so forth. And when someone is described as Medinese for example, it will usually indicate where he dictated ḥadīth in old age.<sup>590</sup> A glance at the above data is sufficient to show that in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān, the centre of ḥadīth studies flourished in Iraq and Khorasan or in the Abbasid eastern land.

The fundamental corpus to this book may lie in the sayings, acts, and endorsement of the Prophet. In a sense, all ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* are narratives, since they convey reports of events involving the Prophet and Companions. Most of the *matn*, however, contain simple, single acts of the Prophet, verbal speech of commands or prohibitions, voluntary declarations, all with or without circumstantial setting. These structures stand in miscellaneous quality, contingent upon the type of oratory occupied, and conclude the passage which can be quite extended. Simultaneously they are different in structure from those *matn* that engage conversational exchanges and/or dramatic actions in the process of communicating whatever ḥadīth of deeds, word, or endorsement is the subject of any given report.<sup>591</sup>

<sup>587</sup> *Akhbaranā Aḥmad b. Yahya b. Zuhayr bi-Tustar, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/359. Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad al-Tustarī (d. 310/), 75 Ḥadīth. See *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/362.

<sup>588</sup> *Akhbaranā ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Mūsā bi-‘Askar Mukram, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/175. For biographies of ‘Abdān ‘Abd Allāh al-Jawāliqī al-Ahwazī, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/168.

<sup>589</sup> *Akhbaranā Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Sūfī bi-Baghdad*. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/274. For biographies of al-Ḥasan al-Sufi, see *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/152.

<sup>590</sup> Christopher Melchert, “The Life and Works of al-Nasā’ī”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* LIX/1 Autumn 2014, 390.

<sup>591</sup> As R. Marston Speight concludes that the narrative structures in the ḥadīth at least contains of two-, three-, and four-part narrative. See R. Marston Speight, “Narratives Structures in the Ḥadīth”, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* vol. 59, no. 4 (Oct., 2000), 265-271.

In general terms, the *matn* of ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* may be treated as a compressed but authoritative collection of legally-oriented ḥadīth as it contains a very large number of *aḥādīth al-aḥkām* (legal ḥadīths). By our count, Ibn Ḥibbān assembles 4997 ḥadīth from *Kitāb al-Ṭahāra* (Book of the Purity)<sup>592</sup> to *Kitāb al-Farā'id* (Book of the Inheritance),<sup>593</sup> which makes up to 80 per cent. A loose analysis of the content of the legal ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* reveals the similarity to *Kutub al-Sitta* and seems to indicate a common source. By examining the *tarājim*, we can identify that Ibn Ḥibbān first seeks the solution of legal problems in the specific terms of the ḥadīth, applying thereto the accepted rules. This explains Ibn Ḥibbān's account of the spectrum of opinions concerning the legal issues exclusively within the domain that he had sifted authentic ḥadīth from weak.

Since the very earliest time, scholars have made a distinction between theological ḥadīth, legal ḥadīth, ethico-moral ḥadīth, and the purely historical material (*sīra wa maghāzī*).<sup>594</sup> According to Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, some scholars were concerned with the greater importance of legal and doctrinal ḥadīths than historical dating, arguing the precise date of Prophet's battles, for instance has no practical utility for a Muslim.<sup>595</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān's explicit dedication of historical material is found in the final book of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, viz. *Kitāb al-Tārīkh*.<sup>596</sup> The *matn* that relates to the *sīra* and *maghāzī* account constitutes a self-contained narrative unit which characterizes an occurrence and in most cases it does not make any reference to the historical situation, nor does it hint at the context in which it arose. Identical with other ḥadīth collections, it is these which preserve for us the most extensive random sample of earlier historical writing and which therefore thoroughly contribute the indigenous historical culture. In principle, Ibn Ḥibbān aimed to bring together all the reliable and well-attested accounts pertaining to each event. His *isnād* or other ḥadīth collections's *isnād* can be easily compared with that of the *sīra* or *maghāzī* literatures. Under the circumstances, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* contradict to the *sīra* or *maghāzī* literatures that have no intention

<sup>592</sup> The first ḥadīth of *al-Ṭahāra* is no. 1037, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 3/311.

<sup>593</sup> The last ḥadīth of *al-Farā'id* is no. 6034, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* 13/396.

<sup>594</sup> Franz Rosenthal has highlighted that "historical material occupied the more modest position as a means of preserving and reflecting the achievements of the Prophet. Second only to the legal, historical material was instrumental in firmly planting into the hearts of a large Muslims the ideals and aspirations of Islam. At the same time, historical material also served to keep alive the memory of significance of their distinctive national heritage for the various nations of Islam. Furthermore, it always maintained a position in which it was able to stimulate a certain interest in valuable aspects of cultural activity which were in danger to be entirely eliminated from Muslim life." See, Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 172.

<sup>595</sup> Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 61.

<sup>596</sup> For a discussion of how hadith scholars analysed reports about the military campaigns of Prophet and the early Muslim community, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Maghazi and the Muhaddithun: Reconsidering the Treatment of "Historical" Materials in Early Collections of Hadith", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 28, no. 1 (Feb., 1996), 1-18.

to construct a connected narrative of events; rather it consists of a series of discrete anecdotes and reports, which vary in length from one line to several pages.<sup>597</sup>

The last distinctive character of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is indeed striking in light of the commentary on ḥadīth by Ibn Ḥibbān. His commentary on the ḥadīth served several functions and was able to take advantage of the scholarship of previous centuries. As Ibn Balabān has standardized, a commentary that appeared after the *matn* is typically introduced by the formula *qāla Abū Ḥatīm* (Abū Ḥatīm [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). Essentially, the commentary is to assist the reader in the basic task of understanding the difficult and uncommon word embedded in the *matn*. Once in a while, Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates on the transmitter in detail from the *isnād* of a ḥadīth.

According to Jonathan Brown, Ibn Ḥibbān and other ḥadīth critics from the third/ninth century and fourth/tenth century did engage in *matn* criticism or content criticism but “consciously manufactured the image of exclusive focus on the *isnād* in an effort to ward off attacks by rationalist opponents.”<sup>598</sup> We shall illustrate Ibn Ḥibbān’s attitude to the *matn* criticism in the commentary which shall indicate his sensitivity to logical impossibility and a rejection of material that contradicts what he knew to be historically, dogmatically and legally true.<sup>599</sup> For example, Ibn Ḥibbān exactly rejects all the ḥadīth that characterize how the Prophet would fasten a rock against his stomach with a cloth to stave off hunger while fasting. He claims that any report about the Prophet is starving would result in God letting His prophet go hungry; a notion that contradicts the ḥadīth “Indeed I am not like any of you; I am fed and given drink [by God].”<sup>600</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān makes further comment that the precise wording of the rock-tying reports is not ‘*ḥajar* (rock),’ but rather ‘*ḥajaz*’, or the end of the loincloth (*izār*). He concludes his argument and says, “And a rock does not stave off hunger.”<sup>601</sup>

Overall this shows the advancement of ḥadīth writing continued alongside that of exegesis, theology, legal principles and other literatures. By the late age of the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the considerable position accustomed to the study of the *matn* resulted in a proliferation of commentaries which gave extensive exploration, including *matn* criticism,

<sup>597</sup> R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1991), 73.

<sup>598</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīths Critics Did *Matn* Criticism and Why It’s So Hard to Find”, in *Islamic Law and Society* 15 (2008), 143-184.

<sup>599</sup> Jonathan Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīths Critics Did *Matn* Criticism,” 161-162

<sup>600</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 14/325

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid*, 8/345

the historical connections and references of the text,<sup>602</sup> theological,<sup>603</sup> juridical,<sup>604</sup> language matters,<sup>605</sup> and the rest. However, Ibn Ḥibbān does not comment on all the ḥadīth, but only on some ambiguous ones that he picks out.

### 3.4 Ibn Ḥibbān's Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>606</sup>

In the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān includes an explanation of the purpose, technical terms in the science of ḥadīth transmission, authentic ḥadīth criterion, the concept of *khavar*, and some aspects of the reliable transmitter. However, much of this part notably includes a section of the legal theory of Ibn Ḥibbān. He prefaced it with a substantial glorification of God, some of which shows his expertise in Arabic

Praise be to Allāh Who deserves praise for His blessings, the sole One in His might and greatness, Who is close to His creation in the highest of His height and far from them in the closest of His closeness, the Knower of hidden matters concealed in intimate conversation, Who is aware of the thoughts of the inner conscience and what is yet more hidden, and aware of what is concealed under the elements of the earth and of the thoughts of people which flit through their minds, Who originated things by His power and scattered people by His will without any prior source from which He imitated it nor any laid out order which He followed. Then He made the intellects as a way for those who possess knowledge and as refuge on the ways of those possessing understanding, and He made what He had created for them of hearing and sight cause of reaching the howness of the intellects, and the taking on the responsibility for research and consideration. So He perfected the fineness of what He managed and was exact in all that He decreed. Then He distinguished the people of discrimination and intelligence with varied types of address, and chooses a group of them to be His elite and guided them to cling to obeying Him by following the path of the people of *taqwā* in holding fast to the Sunnahs and traditions. He adorned their hearts with faith and made their tongues speak with eloquence in disclosing the signs of His *dīn* and following the Sunnahs of His Prophet by undertaking travel and journeys, leaving behind home and family to collect *Sunnahs*, refute sects and obtain understanding about them by abandoning personal opinions.<sup>607</sup>

The annotated passages are selected in order to expound Ibn Ḥibbān's core idea and a careful reading of Ibn Ḥibbān's introduction helps one to understand the distinctive

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<sup>602</sup> Ibid, 15/323

<sup>603</sup> Ibid, 14/10

<sup>604</sup> Ibid, 6/6

<sup>605</sup> Ibid, 1/332

<sup>606</sup> In order to make the translation read more fluently, we have, on frequent occasion, added one or more words in square brackets [ ]. These words cannot be traced to Ibn Ḥibbān's original but are only added for the English reader's sake. What is added in round brackets ( ) constitutes brief explanations in English of Arabic words, mostly technical terms, or vice versa.

<sup>607</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/100-101. This passage is also translated in 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dihlawī, *The Garden of the ḥadīth Scholars*, 102-103.

character of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>608</sup> Carrying as an expression, the title *al-Taḳāsim wa al-Anwāʿ* (the divisions and the categories) inevitably manifests his master plan. As mentioned earlier, to make the case that Ibn Ḥibbān very own introduction is maintained, Ibn Balabān cites and places it in the second part of the reorganization. The following concise treatise on various abstract issues concerning the science of ḥadīth transmission combined with the legal methodology may be considered as perhaps among the earliest books of its genre. Among *Kutub al-Sitta*, only Muslim provides his book with an introduction. Juynboll translates Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and asserts

We do not find in source such as – among others – Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* and Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī's *Taḳdimāt al-Maʿrifāt li-Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* a great many fragments ascribed to authorities earlier than Muslim – who died in 261/875 – containing statements concerning the theory and practice of the science of tradition but, to my knowledge, no integral part text comparable with and earlier than Muslim's has ever come to light.<sup>609</sup>

In general, Ibn Ḥibbān and other ḥadīth scholars of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century were well aware that many spurious ḥadīth had become current, and therefore efforts were made to guard against them.<sup>610</sup> The special emphasis given to the ḥadīth of the Prophet is best understood as a product of the impulse towards uniform authority.<sup>611</sup> The Prophet represented the one figure whose authority all Muslims respected. Echoing a verse of the Qurʾān (4:59), Ibn Ḥibbān says of him, “In the case of a disagreement, it is necessary to refer to his Sunna, since he is the undisputed resort of all.”<sup>612</sup>

There is more than one way of establishing the thesis that the polemical goal of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and other ḥadīth collections had a decisive influence on their contents as well as on their character.<sup>613</sup> However, the assumption is best supported by the striking similarity

<sup>608</sup> Vardit Tokatly, “The Aʿlām al-Ḥadīth of al-Khaṭṭābī: A Commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* or a Polemical Treatise?”, 59.

<sup>609</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, “Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, translated and annotated with and excursus on the chronology of *fitna* and *bidʿa*” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5 (1984), 263.

<sup>610</sup> James Robson, “Muslim Tradition: The Question of Authenticity”, in *Memoires and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society* 93:7 (1951-2), 84-102.

<sup>611</sup> Fazlur Rahman, “Concepts Sunnah, Ijtihad, and Ijmaʿ in the Early Period”, *Islamic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1962), 5-21.

<sup>612</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiya wa Akhbār al-Khulafāʾ*, ed. Saʿd Karīm al-Faqī, (Alexandria: Dār Ibn Khaldun), 15. See also Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite ḥadīth Criticism*, 2-3.

<sup>613</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān on one occasion had to defend the story how Moses gouged out an eye of the Angel of Death against attacks launched by the *ahl al-raʾy wa al-qiyās*. The attackers had called the Ḥadīth scholars “...firewood collectors and ‘night shepherds’, who vented opinions which Islam invalidates.” “But the people who say this”, exclaimed Ibn Ḥibbān, “do not grasp the inner meaning of traditions; they do not realize that the Angel of Death was sent to Moses as a visitation, just as Abraham's being ordered to sacrifice his son had been a visitation. Moses, not realizing that this visitor was an angel, defended himself as any honourable man, who objected to intruders, who have defended himself.” Juynboll, “Ahmad Muhammad Shakir [1892-1958] and his edition Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*,” 236.

between them in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century. Ibn Ḥibbān's students, al-Ḥākim and al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) who wrote the first commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* both describe their current state of affairs; the disappearance of knowledge and the appearance of ignorance, the predominance of the *ahl al-bida'* (people of innovation), the turning of many people towards their doctrines and away from the Qur'ān and the Sunna.<sup>614</sup> Similarly Ibn Ḥibbān complains that his surroundings were flooded with ever-multiplying attributions to the Prophet and dilettantes who could not tell authentic ḥadīths from forged ones

Indeed, when I saw narrations (*khavar*) flooding with ever-multiplying [attributions to the Prophet], and the people's knowledge of its authenticity decreasing, considering their engagement with fabricated books, and memorizing the false and contradiction, so much so the authentic *khavar* were being abandoned not transcribed.<sup>615</sup>

An analysis of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Abu Dāwūd's *Sunan*, Ibn Qutayba's (d. 276/889) *Ta'wīl Mukhtalāf al-ḥadīth*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim's (d. 327/938) *Taqdima*, Ibn Furak's (d. 406/1015) *Mushkil al-ḥadīth wa-bayānihi*, and Khaṭṭābī's (d. 388/998) *A'lām al-ḥadīth*, may be concluded as collection that reflect similar polemical purposes.<sup>616</sup> According to Vardit Tokatly, most of these literatures share two important features: Firstly, the works were written with a declared polemical goal to defend the ḥadīth as well as the people who call themselves *ahl / aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* against their opponents. Secondly, all the authors attempt to achieve that purpose by the same means namely, ḥadīth commentary.<sup>617</sup> As an illustration, it is widely known that Ibn Abī Ḥātim classifies the Muslim intellectual world into two camps that of "*al-ḥadīth*", the scholars like him and "*ahl al-ra'y*" or the "*ahl al-kalām*" that use intellect in the formulation of an opinion in the field of law and theology.<sup>618</sup> Similarly, Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the following *tarjama* about the *ahl al-kalām*

*Dhikr al-zajr 'an mujālasāt ahl al-kalām wa al-qadr wa mufātaḥatihim bi-l-nazar wa-l-jidāl* (An account of the restraining from being associated with *ahl al-kalām* and *al-qadr* and approaching them with contemplation and dialectic)<sup>619</sup>

As it has been seen above, there is straightforward textual evidence that Ibn Ḥibbān promoted scholarly Prophetic studies and that he attacked those who ignored or used ḥadīth

<sup>614</sup> Al-Ḥākim, *Ma'rifa Uḥum al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2003), 106; Al-Khaṭṭābī, *A'lām al-Ḥadīth fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1988), 1/102.

<sup>615</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/102.

<sup>616</sup> Vardit Tokatly, "The A'lām al-Ḥadīth of al-Khaṭṭābī: A Commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* or a Polemical Treatise?", 64

<sup>617</sup> Ibid, 65

<sup>618</sup> Erik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite ḥadīth Criticism*, 2-3.

<sup>619</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/280



without having had any proper training in the field. It was, first and foremost, when Ibn Ḥibbān considers what compilation he should draw up, that he discovered how great the number of ḥadīth was that he had to sift because of its being weak or fabricated. Indeed, Ibn Ḥibbān chooses several *shaykhs* who occupy the *madār*<sup>620</sup> (pivot) in his time, through which ḥadīth were transmitted and were highly articulated, “Perhaps we wrote about more than two thousand *shaykhs* from *Isbijāb*<sup>621</sup> (Sayram) to Alexandria, but we do not narrate except more or less than one hundred and fifty *shaykh* in our book.”<sup>622</sup>

In the wide illustrated image that Ibn Ḥibbān offered there are two degrees of people at the same time; apart from promoting authentic ḥadīth to the wider Muslim public, he demonstrates more academic and epistemological issues, preserving them for the future generations of scholars and students. It is perhaps for this reason that the epistemological arguments are kept within the confines of the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*; those who did not understand science of the ḥadīth, legal theory and so on, or were not interested in it, could simply ignore it. To a considerable degree, many of the earlier ḥadīth scholars do not theorize nor approach the ḥadīth and its transmission of their collections in quite as sophisticated a manner as Ibn Ḥibbān. Thus it is easy to ascertain Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* and his audience. Ibn Ḥibbān adopts certain technical terms in legal theory to create some sort of systemization in his appraisal of ḥadīths.

Furthermore, among the subjects highlighted in the introduction we find studying, teaching, and travelling in quest of truth. For Ibn Ḥibbān, in association with the great ambition of practise and knowledge of ḥadīth is the preservation of knowledge: this means authentic ḥadīth and its transmission. Knowledge of the truth of ḥadīth stacks up with knowledge of its authentic report.<sup>623</sup> A brief look at the Chapter on the devotion to the Sunna and the *Kitāb al-‘Ilm* (Book of the Knowledge), Ibn Ḥibbān praises ḥadīth scholars exceptionally and magnifies the religious benefit of knowledge and study.<sup>624</sup> Supported by the ḥadīth, he shows the real religious meaning of “knowledge” that of the necessity of instruction, the process of instruction, the role of memorization in opposition to written

<sup>620</sup> According to Halit Ozkan, the word *madār* may refer to a transmitter in an *isnād* (its most frequent meaning), to the *isnād* itself, to the text of a ḥadīth, or to an early authority. See Halit Ozkan, “The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madār,” *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2004), 51.

<sup>621</sup> The City of Pai-shui (also Isbijāb, literally “White River”) was located northeast of Tashkent and five miles east of modern Chimkent, Uzbekistan. It is now known as Sayram, Kazakhstan.

<sup>622</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/152.

<sup>623</sup> Asma Hilali, “The Notion of Truth in Ḥadīth Sciences”, *The Claim of Truth in Religious Contexts*, ed. Johannes Thon, (Halle: ZIRS, 2009), 34.

<sup>624</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/176-215 and 1/261-335.

transmission, the appropriate behaviour that preserves the dignity of knowledge, the interpretation and study of knowledge, the relationship of knowledge and action – all these matters, and many others, are dealt specifically in the *tarājim* of mentioned book.<sup>625</sup> Synchronically, it is meant to show the superiority of “knowledge”, that is, of traditional information, over independent opinion (as in the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān used the term “*qiyās*” and “*ra’y*” instead of *ijtihād* or *kalām*) and to set forth the epistemological, educational, and methodological problems involved in the transmission of “knowledge”. Ibn Ḥibbān states

So people devoted themselves to ḥadīth, sought it, travelled in order to obtain it, wrote it down, asked about it, mastered it, discussed it and spread it. They understood it, gave its roots and branches and disseminated it... so that by them Allāh preserved the *dīn* for the Muslims and guarded it from the calumny of the detractors and in cases of dispute, He made them imams of guidance and lamps of darkness in disasters. They are heirs of the Prophet, the intimate companions of the pure, the fulcrum of the *awliyā’*, and the refuge of the god-fearing. He is due praise for His power and His decree, His generosity with His gift and blessing and His bestowing His blessings.<sup>626</sup>

Without doubt, this knowledge follows certain theories in the science of ḥadīth transmission along with the legal theories. Asma Hilali who was concerned with the notion of truth in the science of ḥadīth transmission has highlighted the phenomenon of *taghyīr* (alteration) as paramount to its history. She adds that any theories that emerged are a direct consequence of the phenomenon of alteration.<sup>627</sup> In the opinion of Melchert, Ibn Ḥibbān is the first author to define his system of criterion that might be called a theory of authenticity.<sup>628</sup> This theory of authenticity is established upon a set of formulas pertaining to the transmission and its knowledge. According to Ibn al-Qaysarānī, “It has not been transmitted of any of them (the Six) that he said, ‘I have made a condition of putting (a ḥadīth report) in my book that it meet such and such criterion’, so expressly.<sup>629</sup> Al-Ḥākim was the head of the line to scrutinize Bukhārī’s authentication, proclaiming that a ḥadīth report met Bukhārī’s authentication if it had at least ‘*adlayn* (two reliable transmitters) at every

<sup>625</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in medieval Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 74.

<sup>626</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/101.

<sup>627</sup> Asma Hilali, “The Notion of Truth in Ḥadīth Sciences”, 34.

<sup>628</sup> Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 121, no. 1 (Jan. – Mar., 2001), 10.

<sup>629</sup> Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *Shurūṭ al-A’imma al-Sitta in Thalāth Rasā’il fī ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktab al-Matbu’at al-Islamiya, 1997), 85.

generation.<sup>630</sup> Meanwhile Ibn Ḥibbān presents the theory of authenticity in the following ways

As for our conditions regarding the transmitters of the ḥadīth placed in our book, indeed, we have not placed in this book other than transmissions in which every transmitter has met five requirements; (1) *al-ʿAdāla* (righteous conduct) and magnificently concealed [from misdeed] in the religion. (2) *al-Ṣidq* (trustworthy) and familiar [student] in the ḥadīth. (3) *al-ʿAql* (rational) when he transmits the ḥadīth. (4) *al-ʿIlm* (Knowledge) about the meaning of what he is transmitting. (5) *al-Mutaʿarrī* (does not contain) with the *tadlīs* (concealed omissions in the *isnād*).<sup>631</sup>

It has been correctly posited that early ḥadīth theory of authenticity revolved almost entirely around the examination of *isnāds*.<sup>632</sup> And Ibn Ḥibbān exactly demonstrates no exception to this account, for the scope of his formulas applied a great stress on criticism of the chain of transmission, which meant criticism of the various transmitters through whom the report had been transmitted.<sup>633</sup> He bases his analysis of ḥadīth on the comparison of different narrations from which he selects the most solid and reliable versions. As a centre of science of the ḥadīth, the theory of authenticity is not a simple memory exercise but rather a quest for truth.<sup>634</sup> Correspondingly, the notion of truth is synonymous with authentic ḥadīth which refers to a historical period i.e. the prophetic era.

From the theory of authenticity, Ibn Ḥibbān advances to construct a structure that he termed “*al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwāʾ*” (the divisions and the categories) and it is also the title of his book. This title presents a very clear conception of the degree to which his work is a collection dealing with the body of ḥadīth by the divisions and the categories which are interpreted with legal theories. Its higher objective is first to study the ḥadīth, especially on the basis of the texts, supply a set of principles and support for the solutions. He criticizes those who were discovering for the upside down or the inductive approach using the term *al-qiyaṣ al-mankūs* (the inverted analogy). Although he does not present a single name of an individual or group throughout epistemological arguments, he is inverting Ḥanafite’s logic. Certainly he argues that the Prophet’s word or action was itself *dalīl* (authoritative source), not *istidlāl* (interpretive reasoning). In that respect, the Prophet’s position is unique and cannot be occupied by others. For all these, Ibn Ḥibbān credits al-Shāfiʿī’s opinions and

<sup>630</sup> Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 10-11.

<sup>631</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/151.

<sup>632</sup> Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāraqutnī’s Adjustments of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*”, 12

<sup>633</sup> Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 8; Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 105.

<sup>634</sup> In the opinion of Asma Hilali, when a ḥadīth scholar uses the usually equivocal concept of truth in their rigorous scientific demonstrations, he is addressing not the technical knowledge of a ḥadīth expert but rather his belief. See Asma Hilali, “The Notion of Truth in Ḥadīth Sciences”, 37.

works from which he borrowed every *aṣl* (revealed case) and every *farʿ* (assimilated case).<sup>635</sup> It will emerge that, in many instances, Ibn Ḥibbān follows al-Shāfiʿī's terminology of hermeneutic techniques.

In the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates the Sunnah structure as it contains 400 categories under 5 divisions; the division on commands has 110 categories, the division on prohibitions has 110 categories, the division of formatives has 80 categories, the division of permissible has 50 categories, and the division of prophetic actions specific to him contains 50 categories.<sup>636</sup> If this is so, it may be said that each original volume is parallel with five divisions made by Ibn Ḥibbān for his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. He sets forth the divisions as follows

Thus I saw it [the authentic ḥadīth] divides into five equals and concurrent divisions without inconsistency:

The first one: The obligation that Allāh commands for His slaves for it

And secondly: The forbidden that Allāh prohibits His slaves from it

And thirdly: His statement that which required for knowing it

And fourthly: The permissions that permitted committing it

And fifthly: Prophet's actions that he alone acts upon it.<sup>637</sup>

Additionally, in relation with the ḥadīth rearrangement, Ibn Balabān reveals it as follows

For example, if the ḥadīth is from the eleventh categories, it facing like (11). Then if it was from the first division, the number uncovered from any signs as you have already seen. And if it was from the second division, it be like a linewidth under the number (11). And if it was from the third division, it be like an upper line (1̄1). And if it was from the fourth division, it be like the number between two lines (1̄1̄). And if it was from the fifth division, it be like the two upper lines (1̄1̄).<sup>638</sup>

In his article, Scott Lucas rightly says “there exists a second Sunnī tradition of legal theory, virtually unstudied, that runs parallel to the mainstream one.”<sup>639</sup> That means that the

<sup>635</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 5/497.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid*, 1/105-149.

<sup>637</sup> *Faawwaluhā: al-Awāmir allatī amara Allāh ʿibādahu bihā*

*Wa-l-thānī: al-Nawāhī allatī nahā Allāh ʿibādahu bihā*

*Wa-l-thālith: Ikḥbāruhu ʿanmā ihtija ilā ma ʿrifatihā*

*Wa-l-rābiʿ: al-Ibāhāt allatī ubīha irtikabuhā*

*Wa-l-khāmis: Afʿāl al-Nabī allatī nfarada bifī lihā. Ibid*, 1/168.

<sup>638</sup> *Idhā kāna al-ḥadīth min al-nawʿ al-ḥādī ʿashar mathalan, kāna bi-ʿizāihi kamā raʾaytahu (11). Wa in kāna min al-qism al-thānī, kāna taḥta al-ʿadad khaṭṭ ʿaraḍ hakadhā (11). Wa in kāna min al-qism al-thālith, kāna al-khaṭṭ min fawqih hakadhā (1̄1). Wa in kāna min al-qism al-rābiʿ, kāna al-ʿadad bayna khaṭṭayn hakadhā (1̄1̄). Wa in kāna min al-qism al-khāmis, kāna al-khaṭṭan fawqahu hakadhā (1̄1̄). Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/172.

<sup>639</sup> Scott C. Lucas, “The Legal Principles of Muhammad b. Ismaʿil al-Bukhārī and Their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2006), 289-324.

earliest surviving articulation of legal theory in al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and many others works of ḥadīth scholars has been overshadowed by the dominant tradition of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The legal theory sketched out by Ibn Ḥibbān in his introduction has eluded the attention of contemporary scholarship easily because his opinions and legal theories seem to be absent from the Islamic legal tradition itself.

Undoubtedly Ibn Ḥibbān offers his own conception of the Sunnah, a more systematic methodology of interpretation of the ḥadīth. One of basic tasks of Ibn Ḥibbān is to anchor the legal principle in the Prophet’s life. He asserts that the purposes of the divisions are that they; firstly, enlighten a disputed report among the scholars and its figurative meaning (*ta’wīl*). Secondly, these divisions will assist most of the people in the basic task of understanding the meanings and yield a purposeful interpretation.<sup>640</sup> The point to be noted is that he differentiates the Sunnah that would carry no special authority for other Muslims with the Sunnah that has a different implication in the law. It is proposed that the scope of the Sunnah comprises of its obligatory, forbidden, formative, permitted, and exclusive. Significantly, later jurists debated whether it is possible for the Prophet to engage in *ijtihād* (independent judgement), an activity which would rise to mere fallible opinion, not to Sunna.<sup>641</sup> For Jasser Auda writes, “it could be actions exclusive to him out of prophethood considerations or actions that he did out of custom (*‘āda*) of a ‘man living in seventh century’s Arabia’.”<sup>642</sup> The Sunna implies a ruling and all schools of law accept it as legislation on condition that it does not fall under actions that are specific to the Prophet.

Moreover, when a ḥadīth had been evaluated led back explicitly to the Prophet, and had been classified the relevance and degree of applicability of any given rule or precedent according to the divisions and categories, Ibn Ḥibbān made it available in organized book chapters. It should be remembered that many of the chapters of ḥadīth books, at least from the time of *al-Muwattā’* of Mālik, are organized around legal topics. These *tarjama* (headings or titles) are taken over directly by the early law books and show that ḥadīth collections are proto-lawbooks as it was al-Shāfi’ī’s works in the case of Ibn Ḥibbān. It is, therefore, no surprise that the development of legal studies and the *madrasa* oriented to a specific jurist or law school should immediately follow the flowering of ḥadīth studies in

<sup>640</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/149.

<sup>641</sup> Muhammad Athar ‘Alī, “A Critical Legal Controversy Regarding *Ijtihad*: *Ijtihad* of the Holy Prophet (P.B.H), *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, 45.1, Jan 1, 1997, 99-108.

<sup>642</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘a as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A System Approach*, (UK: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2007), 219.

this eastern Islamic era.<sup>643</sup> Ḥadīth reports of *aḥkāṁ* (assessment) are characteristically those that indicate in which category a given act belongs. Ibn Ḥibbān also simply announces his juridical positions in the *tarjama*, then related the ḥadīth that support them. Ḥadīth reports are not just authorities corroborating his assessments, but they practically are the judgement.<sup>644</sup> It is with this sense he cites al-Shāfi‘ī’s famous quotation “if the ḥadīth is authentic, that is my *madhhab* (school).”<sup>645</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān not only evaluates and insures its authenticity as much as possible, but also smooths out its numerous apparent contradictions. Most cases of ḥadīth contradiction are because of apparently missing context.<sup>646</sup> For example, Ibn Ḥibbān represents the method of *jam‘* (conciliation) for harmonizing in the case of two ḥadīth that discusses whether the Prophet was following Abu Bakr in the prayer or not.<sup>647</sup> In any event, the method of *al-naskh* (abrogation) and the method of *al-tarjīḥ* (elimination) in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* treat a ḥadīth no differently, apart from the discussion of what statement repeals which, there is a clear reference to the importance of the chronological order taken into account.<sup>648</sup> The following description of Ibn Ḥibbān’s appraisal narration is typical of the method of *naskh*: “The ḥadīth of Ṭalq b. ‘Alī is the abrogated report because his coming to the Prophet was in the first year of *hijra* when people built the Prophet’s mosque... And Abu Hurayra becomes Muslim in the seventh year of *hijra*, indicating that Abu Hurayra’s report occurred seven years after Ṭalq b. ‘Alī report.”<sup>649</sup> As the above example shows, narrations were associated with specific transmitters, whose version of that Prophetic tradition could then be contrasted with other transmitter’s narrations.<sup>650</sup>

Towards the end of the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān presented the most fundamental question to be asked here; what is the source he selected for these five divisions as being of salient importance to the Sunnah? In the legal theory books, apart from each word of the Qur’ān, the Sunnah is generally accepted under the heading of revelation.<sup>651</sup> Therefore the

<sup>643</sup> Roy Mottahedeh, “The Transmission of Learning: The Role of the Islamic North East,” in Nicole Grandin and Marc Gaborieau (eds.), *Madrasa: Le Transmission du Savoir dans le Monde Musulman*, (Paris: ap Editions Arguments, 1997), 63-72.

<sup>644</sup> Christopher Melchert, “Traditionist-Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law,” 388.

<sup>645</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 5/497.

<sup>646</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘a as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A System Approach*, 219.

<sup>647</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 4/219.

<sup>648</sup> Wael Hallaq, “The Primacy of the Qur’ān in Shāfi‘ī’s Legal Theory”, *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 72

<sup>649</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 3/405; 2/315; 3/435.

<sup>650</sup> Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāraquṭnī’s Adjustments of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*”, 12

<sup>651</sup> See Bernard Weiss, *The Search for God’s Law*, 161; Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2008), 129.

status of *khavar* (report) or ḥadīth that constitute the Sunnah has continued to command intense attention among scholars. The statement delivered by Ibn Ḥibbān is undoubtedly one of the most under discussed in the field of classical and contemporary ḥadīth when he reveals

The entireties of reports [of the Prophet] are *aḥad* reports, because there exists no report from the Prophet narrated by two upstanding transmitters, each one of them from two upstanding transmitters until it ends at the Prophet. When it be impossible that is invalid. It has been proven that all the reports are *aḥad* reports. And those who uphold on acceptance of *aḥad* reports have intended to abandon all of the Sunnah. Since no Sunnah has been transmitted except the *aḥad*, whoever rejects the *aḥad* ḥadīth has denied the entire Sunnah.<sup>652</sup>

The basic meaning of *khavar* denotes “a piece of information” or it constitutes a self-contained narrative unit which depicts an incident.<sup>653</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān uses the term *khavar* and *ḥadīth* as synonyms. In recent works in ḥadīth scholarship, the term *khavar al-aḥad* has been applied to a report going back to one single authority in the *isnād*.<sup>654</sup> However, in *uṣūl al-fiqh* the *khavar* is treated from a number of perspectives, but what concerns us here is the perspective of the number of transmissions.<sup>655</sup> Throughout the history, the term *khavar al-wāḥid*, *khavar al-infirād*, and *khavar al-khassa* are used to refer to *khavar aḥad* as well. According to al-Nawawī, the first scholar who writes about the *khavar al-wāḥid* is al-Shāfi‘ī.<sup>656</sup> Al-Shāfi‘ī dedicates two chapters in his *al-Risāla* and argues that *khavar al-wāḥid* constitutes a *hujja* (argument) if it meets certain conditions.<sup>657</sup>

In the counterpart, *mutawātir* is used to refer a report “transmitted frequently” in every generation. The classification of a report to *aḥad* (single) and *mutawātir* (by a number of people in each generation) is propounded primarily in the books of legal theory or theology (*kalām*). Yet the discussion on *aḥad* and *mutawātir* are not only kept within the confines of the number of transmitters; those in which *tawātur lafẓī* (the verbatim *mutawātir* transmission of a text), became distinguished from *tawātur ma‘nawī* (transmission according only to the meaning), *mutawātir* provides necessary knowledge while *aḥad* provides conjectural knowledge and the rest have been thoroughly explained in the books of legal

<sup>652</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/156.

<sup>653</sup> Stefan Leder, “The Literary Use of the *Khavar*: A Basic Form of Historical Writing”, in Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, 1, *Problems in the Literary Source Material*, (Princeton: 1992), 279.

<sup>654</sup> *EI2*, 4/896.

<sup>655</sup> For further discussion, see James Robson, “Traditions from Individuals,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1964, vol. 9, issue 2, 327-340; Wael Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Ḥadīth: A Pseudo-Problem,” *Studia islamica*, no. 89 (1999), 75-90.

<sup>656</sup> Al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, (Cairo: Al-Azhar, 1929), 1/131

<sup>657</sup> *EI2*, 4/896.

theory or theology. For then Huseyin Hansu relates this distinction of *aḥad* and *mutawātir* is alleged referring back to Wāṣil b. ‘Atā’ (d. 131/748), the ostensible founder of Mu‘tazilī theology.<sup>658</sup> However al-Shāfi‘ī rejects this dichotomy as he argues in the chapter of *al-Risāla*.<sup>659</sup>

In general, the *mutawātir* reports have been explained in chapters or sections that are frequently excessive in length by the legal theorist because it’s important discussion of epistemological certainty. For instance, al-Ghazalī’s *al-Mustaṣfā* treats *mutawātir* in both a topic from jurisprudence and a topic from theology (as in the theory of knowledge) and Bernard Weiss has analysed its conditions. Al-Ghazalī plainly indicates that the conditions are: (1) the statement about the past event must be based on certainty and empirical observation; that is to say, it must be true in the sense of being empirically based; and (2) the number of persons making the statement (or number of occurrences of the statement) must be adequate.<sup>660</sup> However, there is no consensus concerning the requisite number of transmitters in the *mutawātir*. Al-Ghazali rejects the attempt by others to set any number and holds that this number is known only to God. Bernard Weiss adds that “One does not argue one’s way from adequacy of number to the truth of the statement. The reverse, in fact, is the case.”<sup>661</sup>

Moreover, the classification of ḥadīth to *aḥad* and *mutawātir* did not exist in the discourse of ḥadīth scholars until the fifth/eleventh century. It also has been discussed in detail by Ḥātim al-‘Awnī who has articulated the origin of the classification in the field of the science of ḥadīth transmission.<sup>662</sup> He suggests al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī who was the first ḥadīth scholar to use this classification influenced by legal theorist understanding. Huseyin asserts the dichotomy of *aḥad* and *mutawātir* began as an epistemological exercise in the fields of legal theory and theology and was later applied to the ḥadīth sciences.<sup>663</sup> From the time of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī onwards, a remarkable amount books sciences of the ḥadīth transmission apply this classification which led to some ambiguities. For example, Ibn Ḥajar has provided a definition of *mutawātir*: “a transmission by a group of transmitters on the

<sup>658</sup> Huseyin Hansu, “Notes on the Term Mutawātir and Its Reception in Ḥadīth Criticism”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 16, no.3/ 4 (2009), 391.

<sup>659</sup> Ḥātim al-‘Awnī, *al-Manhāj al-Muqtariḥ li-Fahm al-Muṣṭalāḥ*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Hijra, 1996), 102.

<sup>660</sup> Bernard Weiss, “Knowledge of the Past: The Theory of ‘Tawātur’ According to Ghazalī,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 61 (1985), 90.

<sup>661</sup> Bernard Weiss, “Knowledge of the Past: The Theory of ‘Tawātur’ According to Ghazalī,” 94

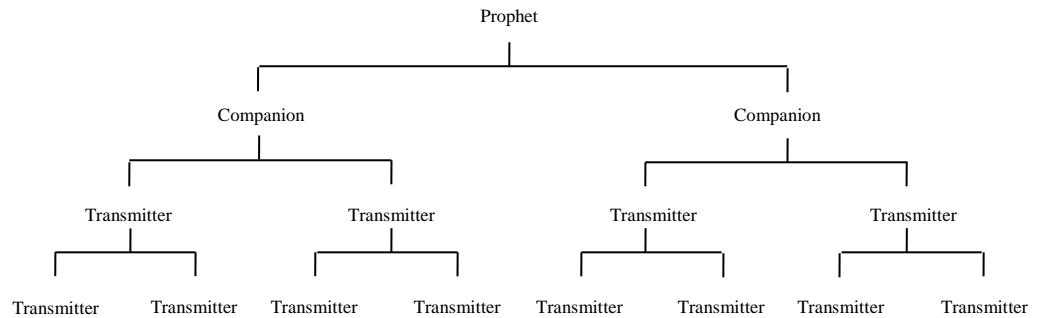
<sup>662</sup> Ḥātim al-‘Awnī, *al-Manhāj al-Muqtariḥ li-Fahm al-Muṣṭalāḥ*, 91.

<sup>663</sup> Huseyin Hansu, “Notes on the Term Mutawātir and Its Reception in Ḥadīth Criticism”, 406.



authority of another group of transmitters from the beginning of the transmission until its end and this in every generation.”<sup>664</sup>

Diagram 1



Nevertheless, to this point, analyses by Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itr,<sup>665</sup> Ḥātim al-‘Awnī,<sup>666</sup> Juynboll,<sup>667</sup> Huseyin Hansu<sup>668</sup> and many others have shown that there is no ḥadīth that has been transmitted through two transmitters on each level of the *isnād*. Ibn al-Salah similarly did not include the *mutawātir* concept in his comprehensive work and states there are no *mutawātir* in the ḥadīth literatures.<sup>669</sup> Ṣubhī al-Ṣāliḥ says further that only the Qur’ān has been transmitted through multiple chains of transmitters.<sup>670</sup> Earlier before Ibn Ḥibbān concluded that the Sunnah is entirely originated from the *khābar al-aḥad*. Following this, Al-Hazimi emphasizes that Ibn Ḥibbān’s conclusion seems to be the finest argument against later Mu’tazilites.<sup>671</sup> Therefore Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that whoever rejects the single authority has denied the body of the Sunnah.

## Conclusion

Ibn Ḥibbān chooses to conclude the issue of *khābar al-aḥad* through the theories of definition and syllogistics. In this theory, it was emphasized that the Sunnah must be seen as proceeding from *khābar al-aḥad* or pre-existent axiomatic knowledge to new concepts by means of definitions. If we know, for instance, what ‘*khābar*’ and ‘*aḥad*’ are, we can form

<sup>664</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Nuzhat al-Nazar*, (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Malik Fahd, 2001), 37.

<sup>665</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itr, *Manhāj al-Naqd fi ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), 405.

<sup>666</sup> Ḥātim al-‘Awnī, *al-Manhāj al-Muqtariḥ li-Fahm al-Muṣṭalāḥ*, 91.

<sup>667</sup> Juynboll, “(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 8, no. 3, Ḥadīth and Fiqh (2001), 342

<sup>668</sup> Huseyin Hansu, “Notes on the Term Mutawātir and Its Reception in Ḥadīth Criticism”, 394.

<sup>669</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 268.

<sup>670</sup> Ṣubhī al-Ṣāliḥ, *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Mustalahuh*, (Beirut: Dar al-‘Ilm li-l-Malayin, 1984), 148.

<sup>671</sup> Abū Bakr al-Ḥazimī, *Shurūṭ al-A‘imma al-Khamsa*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1984), 61.

a concept of ‘Sunnah’, which Ibn Ḥibbān defined as “*kullu khabar al-aḥad* (the entirety of reports are *aḥad*).” It is through definitions, then, that the concept of Sunnah is formed by Ibn Ḥibbān.<sup>672</sup>

From another perspective, we might say that Ibn Ḥibbān’s intention is to compose a legal theory book supported with a ḥadīth. *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā al-Taqāsīm wa al-Anwā’* means “An Authentic Transmission for the Divisions and the Categories.” Throughout the introduction and contents of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it shows that Ibn Ḥibbān is unique among fourth/tenth century ḥadīth compilers for both his high standards of ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and his articulation of an unstudied set of divisions and categories that approach the topics in the classical legal theory tradition.<sup>673</sup> This gigantic *Ṣaḥīḥ* could only advantageously be determined and its transmitters be appropriately evaluated with the holistic study of a number of technical terms in the science of ḥadīth transmission and the legal theory. Thus we conclude using his combined terminologies in both fields

They [ḥadīth scholars] clarified the *mursal* from the connected, the *mawqūf* from the *munfaṣil*, the abrogating from the abrogated, the decisive from the annulled, those explained from those undefined, the used from the neglected, the concise from the exhaustive, the binding from those which are set aside, the general from the particular, the proof from the text, the permissible from the forbidden, the unusual from the well-known, the obligatory from the guiding, the define from the promise, those with integrity from those that are impaired, the weak from those that are abandoned, the manner of what is acted upon, disclosing the unknown, what is altered of what is cut off, or reserved of what is falsely attributed, the signs of *tadlīs* (concealed omissions in the *isnād*) and what it contains of deceit.<sup>674</sup>

<sup>672</sup> In this theory, it was emphasized that, to avoid infinite regress, the mind must be seen as proceeding from some *a priori* or pre-existent axiomatic knowledge to new concepts (*taṣawwūrāt*) by means of definitions. See Wael Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiya Against Logicians*, (Oxford University Press, 1993), xv.

<sup>673</sup> Scott Lucas, “Legal Principles of Bukhārī and Their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam,” 297.

<sup>674</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/101.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IBN ḤIBBĀN AS A ḤADĪTH CRITIC

The aim of this chapter is to identify Ibn Ḥibbān as one of the most significant master ḥadīth critics in the Sunni tradition. It begins by carrying out the history of ḥadīth criticism until the time of Ibn Ḥibbān and the techniques that the early critics employed to determine a transmitter. Although a comprehensive analysis of whole of Ibn Ḥibbān's biographical dictionary of impugned transmitters namely *Ma'rifāt al-Majrūhīn wa al-Dhu'afā' min al-Muḥaddithīn* would be very beneficial, this chapter only concentrates on the introduction of the book. This task involves analysing Ibn Ḥibbān's justification for the employment of ḥadīth criticism in his own day, early authorities to his contemporaries, and some of the reports which may be described as impugning of a transmitter.

#### 4.1 Ḥadīth Criticism in the Biographical Dictionaries

Ḥadīth criticism flourished in the Islamic world since the first century of hijrah, and remains a compelling characteristic of Muslim cultural life today. It was not only those who were formally ḥadīth scholars who discussed ḥadīth criticism, but interpreters of the Quran, jurists, theologians, historians and others all made important contributions to the topic. When trying to determine the origin of ḥadīth criticism, the first question usually asked here is what date represents the beginning of ḥadīth criticism in Muslim scholarship? It is impossible to answer this question, since theoretical questions were brought up during Prophet's lifetime.<sup>675</sup>

In Muslim's *Kitāb al-Tamyīz* editorial introduction, A'zami depicts the historical process of ḥadīth criticism by carving three eras across a vast geographical area.<sup>676</sup> He selects the era of the Companions and classifies it as the first phase of ḥadīth criticism of the nascent Sunni tradition (Ibn Ḥibbān states that the last Companion who died in Makkah was Abū al-Ṭufayl 'Āmir b. Wathīla in 107/725).<sup>677</sup> The second phase extends from the Successors' era until the mid to fourth/tenth century in which ḥadīth scholarship was not only established but proliferated. And from the mid of fourth/tenth century onwards is the final phase of

<sup>675</sup> See EI2, "Ḥadīth, III. Criticism of Ḥadīth", 3/24. "*al-Djarḥ wa l-Ta'dīl*", 2/462. "*Ilm al-Ridjal*", 3/1150. Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Tradition*, 73.

<sup>676</sup> See the introduction by A'zami in Muslim, *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, ed. M. Mustafa A'zami, (Riyadh: Sharika al-Ṭibā'a al-'Arabiyya al-Su'ūdiyya al-Mahdūda, 1982).

<sup>677</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāhīr 'Ulamā' al-Amṣār*, 36.

ḥadīth criticism. One point related to understanding the process of ḥadīth criticism, which is particularly relevant to contemporary readers, has been highlighted by Tarif Khalidi:

In general, ḥadīth scholars of the first hundred and fifty years did not believe that they were creating a new science but simply preserving for the community a record, normative, didactic, or homiletic, of Muḥammad and the drama of the early years of the community's history. They were animated by an essentially conservative spirit which tended to view the past as a process of steady decline and their own days as inferior in morality and knowledge to the days of Muḥammad and of his four 'rightly guided' successors ... In passing on the wisdom of ancestors these scholars believed that they were transmitters rather than creator. But the process of transmission became, as so often in the history of cultures, creation through transmission.<sup>678</sup>

According to Shibli Numani (d. 1916), *matn* criticism occurred as early as the time of the Companions.<sup>679</sup> A'zami brings under one heading 'comparison' as the method of early ḥadīth criticism in the era of the Companions. For example, Abū Bakr compared Mughīrah's statement with that of Muḥammad b. Maslamah al-Anṣārī's affirmation upon the issue of the inheritance of a grandmother.<sup>680</sup> Abū Bakr also preferred to remain silent rather than relate on the authority of the Prophet a ḥadīth about which he had the slightest doubt. 'Umar was strict not only with his own ḥadīth but also with that of others. 'Uthmān was reported saying that it was not permissible for anyone to relate ḥadīth that he had not already heard in the time of Abū Bakr and 'Umar.<sup>681</sup>

It is obviously ḥadīth criticism not commenced with *isnād* criticism since ḥadīth may have had its origins in a time when the body of the *isnād* had not yet come into existence.<sup>682</sup> Nabia Abbott points out a tradition traced to 'Alī in which the role of the *matn* is placed ahead of that of the *isnād*. It was *matn* alone that circulated among the Companions, who frequently compared and pooled their ḥadīths in the mosque session of 'Ubāda b. al-Sāmit al-Anṣārī (d. 34/654).<sup>683</sup> And she also considers it was not until after the *fitna* (First Civil War)<sup>684</sup> that the Companions began to be questioned as to corroborative sources and the accuracy of their traditions. Ḥadīth criticism is classified approaches; (1) *matn* i.e. the content of the ḥadīth, (2) *isnād* or the chain of transmission, i.e. furnished biographical

<sup>678</sup> Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 25.

<sup>679</sup> Jonathan Brown, "The Rules of *Matn* Criticism, there are No Rules," 384.

<sup>680</sup> M. Mustafa A'zami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 69.

<sup>681</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Tradition*, 79.

<sup>682</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 161.

<sup>683</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Tradition*, 75.

<sup>684</sup> Contemporary scholars have differed in their views about the origin of the *isnād*. See M. Mustafa A'zami, "The *Isnād* System", in *The Ḥadīth*, ed. Mustafa Shah, (UK: Routledge, 2010), 3/144.

information on the ḥadīth transmitters as a basis for evaluation of their reliability. Also, the investigation certain pairs of transmitters as to establish the continuity of their basic link.<sup>685</sup>

The notion of *matn* or content criticism was often used as part of a ḥadīth criticism connoting the rejection of certain ḥadīths without acceptable meaning. This approach has been discussed roughly in the previous chapter and sometimes allegedly claimed that ḥadīth scholars did not focus their attention on developing a rule by which the *matn* could be analysed.<sup>686</sup> For instance, Khaled Abou el-Fadl quotes Ibn Khaldūn criticizing the inclination of some scholars to overlook the historical context in the process of identifying the authorial statement of the Prophet.<sup>687</sup>

Nevertheless, Brown holds the opposing view that ḥadīth scholars looked only at the *isnād* and not the *matn* to discern the authenticity of ḥadīth. He identifies at least fifteen examples of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Fasāwī, al-Juzajānī, Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Ḥibbān sensitivities to anachronism and logical inconsistency applied in the *matn* of ḥadīth.<sup>688</sup> Earlier before those scholars, al-Shāfi'ī in his *Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth* suggested that it is possible to reconcile two reliable ḥadīths whose meanings seem incompatible. However, when the content of a ḥadīth proved contradictory with what al-Shāfi'ī regarded as the establish truth, he resorted to criticize its *isnād*. In the same way to ḥadīth scholars, they blame a problem in the *isnād*.<sup>689</sup> And it is a normal practise when there were two contradictory ḥadīth on the

<sup>685</sup> Kamaruddin Amin suggests three branches of ḥadīth criticism that of *isnād*, *matn*, and *'ilal*. See Kamaruddin Amin, "The Reliability of the Traditional Science of Ḥadīth: A Critical Reconsideration", in *Al-Jami'ah*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2005/1426H, 261.

<sup>686</sup> Sami Catovic, "Finding a Principled Approach to *Matn* Analysis", in *Contemporary Approaches to the Qur'an and Sunnah*, ed. Mahmoud Ayoub, (The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1433AH/2012), 157.

<sup>687</sup> Ibn Khaldūn describes in his famous *al-Muqaddima*: "The (writing of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness. (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from highroad of truth. Historians, Qur'an commentators and leading transmitter form, without regard for its value. They did not check them with the principles underlying such historical situations, nor did they compare them with similar material. Also, they did not probe (more deeply) with the yardstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight. Therefore, they strayed from the truth and found themselves lost in the desert of baseless assumptions and errors." Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 1/15-16. See also Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, (Oxford: One World, 2005), 109.

<sup>688</sup> Jonathan Brown, "How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did *Matn* Criticism?" in *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2008), 143-184.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid, 184.

same legal question, the one presented with the most lines of transmission would be accepted as evidence to regulate the law.<sup>690</sup>

The subject of conflict within the *matn* and attempted reconciliation between them were further discussed by ḥadīth scholars after al-Shāfi'ī. These include works such as Ibn Qutayba's (d. 271/884) *Ta'wil Mukhtalāf al-Ḥadīth*, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥāwī's (d. 321/933) *Mushkil al-Āthār*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Isfahānī's (d. 406/1015) *Mushkil al-Ḥadīth wa Bayānuh* and etc.<sup>691</sup> Yet in the fifth/eleventh century, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī explained that there exists an entire category of ḥadīths that are immediately clear as forgeries on the basis of their contents alone.<sup>692</sup> Brown claims that the list of content criteria originated from al-Khaṭīb influenced almost every significant ḥadīth scholars who wrote on ḥadīth criticism after him. For the record, the first systematic discussion and application of content criticism among ḥadīth scholars did not appear until Ibn al-Qayyim's (d. 751/1350) *al-Manār al-Munīf fī al-Ṣaḥīh wa'l-ḍa'īf*.<sup>693</sup>

It is undeniable that the methodological vision of the early ḥadīth scholars to a great extent revolved around the examination of *isnād*. The dependence of ḥadīth on the *isnād* was one of the basic assumptions of the classical understanding of ḥadīth and consequently an elaborate system was developed to evaluate the authenticity of the *isnād*. When the *isnād* reaches back to the Prophet, there is clearly an implicit claim for authenticity, the individual links or ascriptions simply authorize the accuracy of the *matn*. Ḥadīth scholars set their efforts to scrutinize the series of names linking their time with that of the first and oldest authority, i.e. mostly the Prophet and to focus as well on transmitters influence over an evaluation of the whole report.<sup>694</sup>

<sup>690</sup> In a wide lens, scholars would also reject one source of knowledge and the other is given priority. For further discussion in the case of revelation and reason that contradict each other see Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī at His Most Rationalist: The Universal Rule for Allegorically Interpreting Revelation (*al-Qānūn al-Kullī fī t-Ta'wīl*)" in *Islam and Rationality: The Impact of al-Ghazālī*, vol. 1 ed. Georges Tamer, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2015), 89.

<sup>691</sup> Al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt, 16 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1994); On this topic in general, see Joseph E. Lowry, "The Legal Hermeneutics of al-Shāfi'ī and Ibn Qutayba: A Reconsideration", in *Islamic Law and Society* vol. 11, no. 1 (2004), 1-41.

<sup>692</sup> These consist of reports that either; (1) *al-'uqūl* (reason) rejects as impossible, such as the notion that there is no Creator, (2) contradict the Qur'an, the massively transmitted Sunna of the Prophet (*al-Sunna al-Mutawātira*) or the consensus of the Muslim community, (3) are transmitted by limited narrations but address a topic so important for Muslim that, if the ḥadīth were truly the Prophet's words, it would have been much more widely transmitted, (4) or recount events so momentous that if the report were true it would have been more widely transmitted. Jonathan Brown, "The Rules of *Matn* Criticism, there are No Rules," 362.

<sup>693</sup> Jonathan Brown, "How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did *Matn* Criticism?" 145.

<sup>694</sup> The study of the transmitter has been defined by B. Scarcia Amoretti, "... [It is] the science devoted to the study of the persons figuring in *isnāds*, with the purpose of establishing their moral qualities (and thus

In general we find the critical output of ḥadīth scholars was confined to the extensive magnum opus they devoted to identifying and evaluating *rijāl* (transmitter) or examining various narrations of ḥadīths for *ʿilal* (technical flaws) not associated with their meanings.<sup>695</sup> Both terms *rijāl* and *isnād* used interchangeably with the term *isnād* criticism and *rijāl* criticism contain of necessity numerous references to *ʿilal*, while *ʿilal* studies are in fact *rijāl* works analysing (the absence of) certain links among them.<sup>696</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's biographical dictionary that is *Kitāb al-ʿilal wa Maʿrifat al-Rijāl* reflects both approaches in its title, however, there is not yet discernible an alphabetical arrangement of the *rijāl* treated.

According to Tarif Khalidī, the *isnād* criticism was particularly suited to controversy because it forced evaluation of what constitutes a man's reputation e.g. trustworthy or untrustworthy.<sup>697</sup> For Aʿzami notes, "One finds that a father graded down his own son, a son criticized his father, a brother criticized his own kin and friends criticized their dear ones without any fear or favour except the fear of Allah".<sup>698</sup> And ḥadīth scholars were responsive of the fact that evaluating a man's reputation is a very controversial issue. In the manner that al-Nawawī says the *jarḥ* and the *taʿdīl* are made lawful for the protection of the religion.<sup>699</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī also has discussed the controversy at some length.<sup>700</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar quotes from Ibn Ḥibbān's *al-Thiqāt* who suggested that Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776) was the first to scrutinize ḥadīth transmitters in Iraq or rather as it turned out in the entire Muslim world.<sup>701</sup> Shuʿba was followed in this technique by Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-

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guaranteeing their truthfulness), the bibliographical details which will provide the necessary checks on either the materials transmitted or the *isnāds* themselves, and finally the exact identification of the names, to prevent confusion between persons of the same". See *EI2*, "ʿIlm al-Ridjāl", 3/1150.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> *EI2*, "Ridjāl", 8/515.

<sup>697</sup> Tarif Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 25.

<sup>698</sup> Mustafa Aʿzami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 63.

<sup>699</sup> Al-Nawawī, *al-Taqrīb* (with commentary *al-Tadrīb*), 2/298.

<sup>700</sup> Al-Khaṭīb says: "Some people [...] have criticized the commenting by the experts among our imams and the people of knowledge from our ancestors that so-and-so transmitter is weak, and that so-and-so is not reliable, and whatever is similar to that, and they consider that as backbiting those about whom these comments are made if that fault [really] is found in them, and as slander if that fault is not found in them. Their ḥadīth [that they base this opinion on] is the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayra that the Messenger of God (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) was asked: What is backbiting? He said: To mention about your brother what he dislikes. The person asked: What if what I say [really] in my brother? The Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) said: If what you say is in your brother, then you have backbitten him, and if it is not in him, then you have slandered him. What they say is not valid: for the people of knowledge are unanimous that a report should not be accepted except from an intelligent, truthful person who can be trusted in what he says. In that there is evidence of permissibility of *jarḥ* of the one who is not truthful in his narration. Also the Sunnah of the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) has come clearly attesting to what we have stated, and opposing the opinion of those who differ from us". See Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī ʿIlm al-Riwāya*, (Hyderabad: Dāʿira al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmaniyya, 1357), 37-38.

<sup>701</sup> Ibn Ḥajar adds that Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj was the first to scrutinize ḥadīth transmitters in Iraq. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, (Hyderabad: Dāira al-Maʿārif al-Niāmiyya, 1325H), 4/345.

Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and many others.<sup>702</sup> The task evaluating transmitters is more complex as the number of intermediaries expanded in the second/eight century.<sup>703</sup> Yet critics of this era were dealing primarily with people they knew directly or with people whom their teachers knew. The volume of the testimonials by them increased with the passage of time and mainly orally-transmitting until the writing of criticism works began late in the second/eight century, and grew in scope in the third/ninth century.<sup>704</sup> Their activities were eventually put down in writing, thus giving rise to a new genre of literature that of the biographical dictionaries of transmitters' criticism works.<sup>705</sup>

For an entry of transmitter, in the first place, critics determine exactly the transmitter's full name and place of origin or the place his ḥadīth circulated.<sup>706</sup> The structure continues with a list of men the transmitter transmitted from and another of those who transmitted from him follows. In critics' selection of material, one or more of transmitter's ḥadīth noted; then an incident or testimonial is quoted which reflected moral qualities and doctrinal leanings. Sometimes critics conclude the entry with his date and place of death.<sup>707</sup> Primarily, the documentary and testimonial evidence on the men are results achieved by a critic.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ advises the students of ḥadīth mastering the two major works in this genre that are *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* of Bukhārī and the *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim.<sup>708</sup> According to Juynboll, these two works were followed by a number of others which as far as possible encompassed the information contained in already existing ones.<sup>709</sup>

<sup>702</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 4/345.

<sup>703</sup> Ghassan Abdul Jabbar, *Makers of Islamic Civilization: Bukhārī*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 93-94.

<sup>704</sup> Muḥammad Abdul Rauf, "Ḥadīth Literature-1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth", 284.

<sup>705</sup> The biographical materials are drawn from a number of genres and include varied items since literary traditions were exceptionally rich in this particular subject. The Books of names, paidonymics, nicknames, history of cities and many others which supplied critics with evidence on each transmitter or helped him to identify each transmitter.

<sup>706</sup> *Kāna bi-Baghdād* (he was in Baghdad); *Ḥadīthuhu fī al-Shāmiyyīn* (His ḥadīth [circulated] among the people of Sham); *ka'annahu sakana Makka* (He seems to have lived in Makkah). See *Tārīkh al-Kabīr* 1/281, 286,

<sup>707</sup> Leonard Librande, "Al-Dhahabī's Essay *Amsar Dhawat al-Athar*", in *Bulletin d'études orientales*, T. 32/33 (1980/1981), pp. 113-160.

<sup>708</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 251. Recently, Lucas has made a comparative study between three earliest biographical dictionaries of transmitters' criticism that available in printed edition; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* of Ibn Sa'd, 'Abbās al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* that based on the critical opinions of Yaḥya b. Ma'īn, and the *ʿilal* works of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. While Dickinson focuses on the *Taqdima al-Ma'rifa li-Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim to illuminates the development of early Sunnite ḥadīth criticism. See Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn Ḥanbal* and Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abi Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)*.

<sup>709</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 134.



Al-Bukhārī and Ibn Abi Ḥātim were able to build upon the work of the preceding generation of master critics, some of whom were their direct teachers or father.<sup>710</sup> Hence it is not a coincidence that both books of transmitters' criticism have obtained the high-ranking as the most authoritative books in this genre.

It seems reasonable to identify an evolution in *isnād*, *ʿilal*, or *rijāl* criticism in parallel with the development of strategies for collecting and classifying ḥadīth. Indeed some ḥadīth scholars like Muslim, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn ʿAdī give a general survey of the development of *isnād* criticism from its beginning down to their own era.<sup>711</sup> Apart from theoretical and polemical issues, the inclusion of authoritative critics-list is among the important themes in the introduction of their ḥadīth collections or biographical dictionaries. On that account, Ḥātim al-ʿAwnī suggests to the contemporary reader three following books as the sources of the list of the critics whose opinions are accepted in *rijāl* criticism; *Dhikr man yuʿtamad qawluh fī l-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl* of al-Dhahabī, *al-Mutakallimūn fī al-Rijāl* of al-Sakhāwī, and *al-Muzakkūn li-ruwat al-Akhbār ʿinda Ibn Abī Ḥātim* of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Hallāf.<sup>712</sup>

A quick glance in al-Dhahabī's work shows that he divides them into three classes of critics – severe (*mutaʿannit*), fair (*muʿtadil*), and lenient (*mutasahul*) – and names a select few critics to each of them.<sup>713</sup> After mentioning the classification of severe, al-Dhahabī elaborates further, “if [severe] to approve someone, thus you have to bite on to his word with your back molar teeth ...”<sup>714</sup> Synonymously Juynboll used the classification throughout the stage of describing a transmitter as he states, “The lenient Ibn Ḥibbān called him [Shihāb b. Khirash] *ḍaʿīf*.”<sup>715</sup> Just earlier before Juynboll offers a list of forty-seven *rijāl* critics and

<sup>710</sup> *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* is an advantageous early point of supply for a comparative analysis of Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal's critical opinions. Just as Ibn Abi Ḥātim has brought together a lot of their opinions from a mixture sources. Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 287.

<sup>711</sup> Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 93.

<sup>712</sup> Ḥātim al-ʿAwnī, *al-Taʿdīl li-ʿIlm al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, (Makkah: Dar ʿĀlim al-Fawāʿid, 1421 AH), 23.

<sup>713</sup> (1) Sever class: Ibn Maʿīn, Abū Ḥātim, and al-Jūzajānī. (2) Fair class: Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Abū Zurʿa, and Ibn ʿAdī. (3) Lenient class: al-Tirmidhī, al-Bayhaqī, and al-Ḥākim. See al-Dhahabī, *Dhikr man yuʿtamad qawluh fī l-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*, in *Arbaʿ Rasāʾil fī ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islamiyya, 1990), 171. See also Ibn Hajar, *al-Nukat ʿalā Kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāh*, ed. Rabīʿ b. Ḥādī Umayr, (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāyah, 1994), 1/482.

Based upon al-Dhahabī's classification, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf added some more critics for each levels; (1) Sever class: Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, and al-Nasāʾī. (2) Fair class: Sufyān al-Thawrī, ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. al-Mahdī, Ibn Saʿd, Ibn al-Madīnī, Abū Dāwūd, al-Dāruqutnī. (3) Lenient class: Abū al-Hasan Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿIjlī and Ibn Ḥibbān. See ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, *Dawābit al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Obekan, 2005), 71.

<sup>714</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Dhikr man yuʿtamad qawluh fī l-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*, in *Arbaʿ Rasaʾil fī ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, 171.

<sup>715</sup> Juynboll, “Muslim's Introduction to his *Ṣaḥīh*”, 278.

their books that are arranged in chronological order.<sup>716</sup> He assumes that their books or treatises may have been at Ibn Hajar's disposal during the composition of *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. And his analysis shows that many critics were active in more than one region, the Iraqis seem to outnumber the Northeasterners by two to one.<sup>717</sup>

Lucas has scrutinized seven lists and three *Ṭabaqāt* presentations consisting of the names of a set of critics.<sup>718</sup> These ten sources generate ninety-two names and has been arranged into three chronological periods; the first periods extends from 100-200 AH (718-815), the second one from 200-300 (815-912), and the final one from 300-400 (912-1009). Within these three periods, Lucas later divided into tripartite hierarchy or qualitative grades of critics namely primary, secondary, and 'other', on the basis of the frequency by which each individual scholar is mentioned in the ten sources.<sup>719</sup>

<sup>716</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), Appendix IV.

<sup>717</sup> Christopher Melchert, *Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism*, footnote no. 62.

<sup>718</sup> These sources include: Lists by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Mizzī and al-Dhahabī. *Ṭabaqāt* presentations by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn 'Adī. See Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 113.

<sup>719</sup> It consists of three eras of scholars each of which is divided further into chronological *ṭabaqa*, and has been presented by Lucas in the following way;

Period 1 (100-200 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 1</i>	
Secondary Critics:	al-Zuhrī, al-A'mash
<i>Ṭabaqa 2</i>	
Primary Critics:	al-Awza'ī, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, Ibn 'Uyayna
Secondary Critics:	Ibn Jurayj, Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth b. Sa'd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, Hushaym b. Bashīr
<i>Ṭabaqa 3</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakī', Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī
Secondary Critics:	al-Shāfi'ī, Abū Mushīr 'Abd al-'Ala b. Mushīr
Period 2 (200-300 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 4</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn Ma'īn, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Ḥanbal
Secondary Critics:	Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Numayr, Abū Khaythama, Ibn Abi Shayba, Ibn Rahawayh, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Fallās
<i>Ṭabaqa 5</i>	
Primary Critics:	al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī
Secondary Critics:	Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Nasā'ī
Period 3 (300-400 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 6</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī
Secondary Critics:	al-'Uqaylī, Ibn Ḥibbān
<i>Ṭabaqa 7</i>	
Secondary Critics:	Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Azdī, al-Dāraqutnī, al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī

In essence, the purpose of these critics is to establish characteristically a transmitter in the *isnād*. One of the second century critics, Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) has put into effect a criteria of transmitter, “the transmitter must be a person who prays in congregation, does not drink *nabīdh*,<sup>720</sup> does not tell lies and does not suffer from any mental disqualification.”<sup>721</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī and others had agreed almost unanimously that when a critic evaluates transmitters, he was concerned with two primary keys that are ‘*adāla* (integrity) and *ḍabt* (accuracy).<sup>722</sup> With regards to the possessing ‘*adāla*, it denotes a transmitter’s awareness of his/her moral responsibility, free from guilt for major sins, and not prone to minor sins.<sup>723</sup> On the other hand, *ḍabt* refers to the mental capacity of transmitters, linguistic ability and the accuracy of their transmissions.<sup>724</sup>

One can assume the style for evaluating transmitters remained general and unstructured in the second century. Hereinafter the third century critics advanced for the two focuses of *rijāl* criticism that were the comparison testimonials which they inherited from earlier times and a series of technical terms or grades. By adopting comparison, a critic abridged an abundance of materials and through his selection and arrangement, he provided a context of his own designation. Mehmet Akif insists that it is quite usual to view the grades in general as it is subjective in nature and does not yield any consensus that can be measured in statistical terms.<sup>725</sup> Nonetheless, grades were the most popular technique from the third century onwards and consisted of several dozen terms and expressions by different critics. A system of grading was worked out to place the binary of accepted and rejected comments of early critics. The most typically prominent of which were *thiqa* and *ḍa‘īf*. Despite the fact of poor preservation, Lucas pointed out that the emergence of these two terms connected

<sup>720</sup> Which could cause intoxication if kept for a long period of time.

<sup>721</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī ‘Ilm al-Riwāya*, 79.

<sup>722</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: “The integrity of a transmitter is established by an explicit endorsement by those who accredit him and sometimes by general acknowledgement”. See Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 104; Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, 352.

<sup>723</sup> There is disagreement on the number of people required to attest to the integrity of a transmitter. Some scholars required the testimony of at least two critics, similar to the requirement of two testimonies in some legal cases. Others were satisfied with one person, drawing analogy with the acceptance of *ḥadīth aḥad*. See Amr Osman, “Adalat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine”; See also Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.

<sup>724</sup> The accuracy of transmitter comes to be recognized by the comparison of his transmission with others. See Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 106.

<sup>725</sup> Mehmet Akif, “*Isnāds and Rijāl Expertise in the Exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (327/939)*,” 156.

strongly with Shu‘ba, Mālik and Ibn ‘Uyayna and in turn their students appear to have adopted them.<sup>726</sup>

In the twenty-third chapter namely “The characteristic of those whose transmission is accepted and those transmission is rejected, and the allied subjects of impugning and discrediting, and certifying and accrediting,” Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ includes a discussion of the grades that was based on Ibn Abi Ḥātim’s four categories of accreditation and four categories of disapproval.<sup>727</sup> Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of the grades has been discussed by al-Suyūṭī in his commentary on al-Nawawī’s abridgement of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s *Muqaddima* entitled *Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī*. Besides early critics’ grades, he includes the opinions of al-Dhahabī, al-‘Iraqī, and Ibn Ḥajar regarding of the grades not mentioned by al-Nawawī in his abridgement.<sup>728</sup>

#### 4.2 *Ma‘rifāt al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān

Although the most complete work of Ibn Ḥibbān’s grades for appraisal and critique namely *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* is nowhere to be found nowadays, his contribution in this particular discipline still can be established from two other biographical dictionaries *al-Thiqāt* and *al-Majrūḥīn*. Ibn Ḥibbān says in his introduction to *al-Majrūḥīn* that he will give a shortened version of *Tārīkh* material that does not include the transmissions, narrations, and stories. Precisely he indicates that, “These two books *al-Majrūḥīn* and *al-Thiqāt* fulfil a need of abridgement from *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*.”<sup>729</sup> From the two titles one can understand that Ibn Ḥibbān separated two parties’ transmitters of accepted and rejected.

The process by which evaluating transmitters became customary practise culminates with an authentic ḥadīth critic like Ibn Ḥibbān who was devoted to biographical materials that not only are famously but controversially rejected. As the title *al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn* indicates, this work was intended to examine a group of ḥadīth transmitters who are commonly known by their impugning and weakness. The actual name of this biographical dictionary is “*Ma‘rifāt al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa al-Ḍu‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn*,” as noticeably cited by the scribe in the conclusion of the book.<sup>730</sup> However, it is

<sup>726</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 287.

<sup>727</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 122.

<sup>728</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, 890.

<sup>729</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn and Turkī Farḥān al-Muṣṭafā, (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 1/11.

<sup>730</sup> In the last page of the *Majrūḥīn*, the scribe stated, “Complete book of *Ma‘rifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Ḍu‘afā’ min al-Muḥaddithīn* and finished its writing in month of Sha‘bān year 324. We heard it from Abī

often abbreviated to *al-Majrūhīn* or *al-Ḍu‘afā’*. Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection regularly quotes *al-Majrūhīn*. The phrase “*Ma‘rifāt*” translates as gnosis, with the literal meaning “knowing”.<sup>731</sup> The term “*al-Majrūhīn*,” “*al-Ḍu‘afā’*,” and “*al-Matrūkīn*” have come to be customarily applied to the “impugned,” “weak,” and “rejected” transmitters.

This book was a scholarly exercise undertaken by Ibn Ḥibbān to cull the reports by earlier critics who could be subordinated under the impugning of a transmitter. He places them together and so the *Majrūhīn* approximately contains about 1282 entries. The entries are brief as a rule, recording the subject’s teachers, his students and assessments of his merits as a transmitter from Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur‘a and other prominent critics.<sup>732</sup> Apart from the data which are also found in its predecessors in this genre, the book constitutes a major enlargement in that it contains numerous examples of ḥadīth which the weak and rejected transmitters narrate that are supposed to have brought into circulation.<sup>733</sup>

It is understandable that authorship of much early Islamic literature is ambiguous. The uncertainty of authorship continues so long as questions about authorship are not answered in detail in each peculiar case. In what follows, the attribution of *al-Majrūhīn* to Ibn Ḥibbān is made mainly in biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth criticism. But it is also found in works of history, ḥadīth collections, and in the indices of books. Ibn ‘Asākir, for example, states that “Ibn Ḥibbān wrote his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tārīkh*, and *al-Ḍu‘afā’* and many others, while he was teaching in Samarqand.”<sup>734</sup> Moreover, Ibn Ḥibbān is credited by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥajar, and al-Suyūṭī as the author of *al-Majrūhīn* in many biographical notices of transmitters on whose authority Ibn Ḥibbān transmitted accounts of the testimonials.<sup>735</sup> During the time listing the biographical dictionaries of impugned transmitters in *Mizān al-I‘tidāl*, al-Dhahabī mentioned that Ibn Ḥibbān’s work was at his disposal.<sup>736</sup>

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Ḥātim – *raḍī Allāh ta‘ālā ‘anh* – from its beginning to end, by recitation to him [starting] in year 323”. Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddthīn wa-l-Ḍu‘afā’ wa-l-Matrūkīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid, (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1992), 3/161.

<sup>731</sup> Erik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 33.

<sup>732</sup> Juynboll, *EI2*, “Ridjāl”, 8/516.

<sup>733</sup> Later scholars like Ibn al-Jawzī, who famously known as an author of collection of fabrication ḥadīth benefits a lot from the *Majrūhīn* in regards to the studying weak or forged ḥadīth. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-‘Ilāl al-Mutanāhiya fī al-Aḥādīth al-Wāhiya*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1983), 1/19.

<sup>734</sup> Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq* 52/251.

<sup>735</sup> The sources that explicitly attribute this work to him are: *Ta‘līqāt* of al-Dāraqutnī, *al-Ādāb* of al-Khaṭīb, *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* of al-Dhahabī, *al-I‘lān* of al-Sakhawī, *Tadrīb* of al-Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar.

<sup>736</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I‘tidāl*, 1/2.

More than that, Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the *Maʿrifāt al-Majrūhīn wa al-Duʿafāʾ min al-Muḥaddithīn* and it is preserved either completely or in abbreviated versions across various places, including Istanbul, Cairo, as well as Madinah.<sup>737</sup> Saad Eldin adds Hyderabad, Makkah and Rabat where manuscripts are also kept.<sup>738</sup> And the first standard edition of *al-Majrūhīn* was first printed in one volume, in Hyderabad with commentaries by al-Dāraqutnī (d. 385/995).<sup>739</sup> This was ʿAzīz al-Qādirī's edition which only reaches the transmitter "al-Ṣabāḥ b. Muḥammad."

The surviving manuscripts of Ibn Ḥibbān's *al-Majrūhīn* in Cairo are available in a complete printed edition by Dār al-Waʿy, Aleppo in three volumes. The editor, Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm al-Zāyid used two main manuscripts for the reconstruction of the work as a whole which comprised 188 folios in the first edition and in the second, 1315 pages.<sup>740</sup> He infers that Ibn Ḥibbān summarized the *Majrūhīn* from al-Bukhārī's *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*.<sup>741</sup> Meanwhile the latest edition of *al-Majrūhīn* edited by Ḥamdī ʿAbd al-Majīd attempts to improve the previous editions. Using the manuscript from Hagia Sophia Library, Ḥamdī furnished it with footnotes and assigns numbering schemes.<sup>742</sup>

Additionally, there are sources from which we can gain more insight into the history of the *Majrūhīn*. The *Majrūhīn*, like other books, was handed down to succeeding generations by chains of authority. It is related to al-Dāraqutnī who provides valuable information concerning the transmission of the *Majrūhīn* from Ibn Ḥibbān to him. Earliest in order, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī possessed the *Majrūhīn* in a transmission which goes back to Ibn Ḥibbān via al-Dāraqutnī. Based on al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's gigantic *Tārīkh Baghdad*, the transmission reads: "I recited to al-Azharī,<sup>743</sup> from Abī al-Ḥasan al-Dāraqutnī, he said: Abū Ḥātim Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī informed us by *ijāza* (licensing)."<sup>744</sup> Secondly, the

<sup>737</sup> The abbreviation is by al-Dhahabī. See *GAL*, 1/273. *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>738</sup> Saʿd al-Dīn Mansūr Muḥammad, *Ibn Ḥibbān wa Qīmat Kitābayhi al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūhīn*, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2010), 206-209.

<sup>739</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Maʿrifāt al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa al-Duʿafāʾ al-Matrukin*, ed. ʿAzīz Baygh Nawshabandī al-Qadīrī, (Hyderabad, 1970).

<sup>740</sup> Apart from the first printed edition, Maḥmūd states that he also compares the transmitters using other sources of biographical dictionaries such as Yaḥyā's *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāz* and *Mīzān al-ʿItidāl*, al-Suyūṭī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz*, al-Subkī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Shaṭṭiyya* and etc. See the editorial introduction of Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa-l-Duʿafāʾ al-Matrukin* by Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid*, 1/15.

<sup>742</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*, ed. Ḥamdī ʿAbd al-Majīd, (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumayʿī, 2000).

<sup>743</sup> Abū al-Qāsim ʿUbayd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthman al-Azharī al-Baghdādī, died in 435/1043. Al-Khaṭīb says: "We heard from him tremendous books". See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlam al-Nubalaʾ*, 17/578.

<sup>744</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdad*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islamī, 2001), 10/447.

information of the book's transmission was given in the first page of the manuscript that is preserved in Hagia Sophia Library, dated 776 A.H. (1374-75). The following transmission is to be found on the first page of the manuscript:

From the composition of Abī Hātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad b. Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī, may Allāh bestow on His mercy  
*riwāya* of the master Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Dāraquṭnī<sup>745</sup> by licensing from him [Ibn Ḥibbān],<sup>746</sup>  
*riwāya* of Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Jawharī<sup>747</sup> by licensing from him,  
*riwāya* of Abī Manṣūr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Mālik b. al-Ḥasan b. Khayrūn<sup>748</sup> by licensing from him,  
*riwāya* of Abī al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Nāṣir b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī<sup>749</sup> by licensing, and Abī Ṭālib al-Mubārak ‘Alī b. Khuḍayr al-Ṣayrafī<sup>750</sup> both from him.<sup>751</sup>

The term *ijāza* has been applied to the transmission where students are granted permission to transmit the *Majrūhīn*. Although differences of opinion exist, there appears to be some agreement that *ijāza* refers to licensing or granting permission.<sup>752</sup> Nevertheless, al-Dāraquṭnī reorganized the material received from Ibn Ḥibbān together with materials that he received from other teachers.<sup>753</sup> The origin of the material put together in such a new compilation was, as a rule, marked by the name of Abū Hātim (Ibn Ḥibbān) from whom it originated.<sup>754</sup> Just as he did to *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, al-Dāraquṭnī noticed the mistakes in the *Majrūhīn* and furnished it with another complete explanation. Consequently, he created a new synthesis, a new work, of which he himself became the author. The book was later known

<sup>745</sup> Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Dāraquṭnī was known as ‘the *imām* of his time’ and *amīr al-mumīnīn* fī al-ḥadīth’. He was born in Dāra al-Quṭn, a large quarter of Baghdad in 306/918. He died towards the end of 385/995. Among famous book on ḥadīth, he wrote *Ilzamat ala Ṣaḥīḥayn* in which he collected ḥadīth not given by al-Bukhārī and Muslim which fulfilled their conditions. For reference to al-Dāraquṭnī, see Jonathan Brown’s article “Criticism of the Proto-Hadīth Canon, al-Dāruquṭnī’s Adjustment of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15:1 (2004) pp. 1-37. See also J. Robson, ‘al-Dārakuṭnī’, *EI2*, 2/136.

<sup>746</sup> Al-Dāraquṭnī, *Taliqat al Dāraquṭnī ‘ala al-Majrūhīn li-Ibn Ḥibbān*, ed. Khalil b. Muḥammad al-‘Arabī, (Makkah: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriya, 1994), 1/18.

<sup>747</sup> Al-Jawharī was the teacher of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Mākūlā who died in 7 Dhu al-Qā’ida, 454. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, 18/68-70. See al-Sam’ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 2/125-126.

<sup>748</sup> Abū Manṣūr receives most of the *Tārīkh Baghdad* from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī himself. And he died 539/ Baghdad. See, al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20/94.

<sup>749</sup> “Ibn al-Jawzī says: Our teacher (Abū al-Faḍl) was reliable, master, [and] accurate, among the people of Sunna”. Abū al-Faḍl died in Sha’ban, 550/. See, al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20/256-270.

<sup>750</sup> Abū Ṭālib died in Dhu al-Hijja, 562/. See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20/487.

<sup>751</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, the introduction page. See also the copy of manuscript.

<sup>752</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ deals the issue of *ijāza* at some length. See, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *al-Muqaddima*, trans. Dickinson, 109-118.

<sup>753</sup> *Ta’līqāt al-Dāruquṭnī ‘ala al-Majrūhīn li-Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī*, ed. Khalil b. Muḥammad al-‘Arabī, (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1994).

<sup>754</sup> For a discussion about early Islamic transmission of knowledge, see Harald Motzki, “The Author and His Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003), 1-31.

as “*Ta’līqāt al-Dāraqūṭnī ‘alā al-Majrūḥīn li-Ibn Ḥibbān* (al-Dāraqūṭnī’s Appending of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Majrūḥīn*).<sup>755</sup> This shows that al-Dāraqūṭnī took a profound interest in the *Majrūḥīn* and desired to fix any deficiency he found in it.

For all that, the *Majrūḥīn* is highly regarded and is considered one of the most important works of early *rijāl* criticism. Ibn Ḥibbān’s students together with later generations heavily rely upon the material in the *Majrūḥīn*. Assuredly, the completion of the *Majrūḥīn* was preceded by the *Ṣaḥīḥ* as he clearly explained, “Whosoever we assume is not [completely] just in respect of the way that we have described him as not [worthy of being used for] proof, we put him in book of *al-Majrūḥīn* of the transmitters.”<sup>756</sup> Like his other compositions, Ibn Ḥibbān prefaced the *Majrūḥīn* with an introduction, which typically has technical aspects. The technical matters in the *Majrūḥīn* involve the explanation of *rijāl* criticism procedures, those things which the reader should care to know about. On glancing over the introduction in the *Majrūḥīn*, we see right away that this introduction is separated into three matters of contention. Ibn Ḥibbān structured the introduction of *Majrūḥīn* in accordance with his concept of the epistemological arguments, his synopsis of the history of ḥadīth criticism, and the classification of transmitters.

### 4.3 Ibn Ḥibbān’s Introduction to the *Majrūḥīn*

Ibn Ḥibbān commences with opening remarks which are almost identical to those in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The emphasis on the chosen group of people appears in the opening sentences. As usual, he stresses the importance of knowing authentic ḥadīth from the weak by determining the transmitters.<sup>757</sup> He also adds that the group of accepted and reliable transmitters has been mentioned in the previous book (that is the *Thiqāt*), and the *Majrūḥīn* is specific for impugned transmitters.<sup>758</sup> There are at least twelve *tarājim* formulated by Ibn Ḥibbān that are primarily concerned with the encouragement to preserve the Sunnah, retribution for

<sup>755</sup> *Ta’līqāt* (sing. *Ta’līq*) refers to the “appending upon” (‘*ala*) a text or the “deriving from” (‘*an*) an author and then to the resulting notes, comments, excerpts etc. See F. Rosenthal, “Ta’līk”, *EI2*, 5/165.

<sup>756</sup> *Wa man ṣaḥḥa ‘indānā annahu ḡhayr ‘adl, bi-l-‘tibār alladhī waṣafnāhu, lam nahtajj bihi, wa adkhalnāhu fī kitāb al-majrūḥīn min al-muḥaddithīn. Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/155.

Also he mentions, “we have mention the reason Ismail left in book of the *Majrūḥīn*”. *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 12/211.

<sup>757</sup> At this point, he employed word *tamyīz* for the separation between authentic and weak ḥadīth. Occasionally, we found this word used for the separation between reliable and impugned transmitters. See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/13. In addition, in the Qur’ān, the term *yamīz* appears in subjunctive mood, “*yamīza al-khabīth min al-ṭayyib*”, means “He separates the evil from the good”. See, the Qur’ān, 3:179 and 8:37.

<sup>758</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/14.



lying, and justification of the *jarḥ*. Ibn Ḥibbān's *tarājim* neatly permits us to trace his judgement through his classificatory schemes.

In the same way, Ibn Ḥibbān's *tarājim* along with the proof for argumentations in the introduction of the *Majrūḥīn* can be profitably compared with the *tarājim* in the introduction to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Muslim*. Muslim's introduction has been translated by Juynboll referring to al-Nawawī's commentary.<sup>759</sup> However, according to Stephen Burge, Muslim did not write down the *tarājim* as they were added by a later author.<sup>760</sup> Nevertheless, we can find some identical *tarjama* in both books. For instance, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Muslim* there is the, "Chapter on the Coarseness of the Falsehood upon the Messenger of Allāh,"<sup>761</sup> while in the *Majrūḥīn* it reads, "Report on the Coarseness of the Falsehood upon the Messenger of Allāh."<sup>762</sup> At the basis of the evidence, both books use similar ḥadīth to uphold their epistemological arguments. They relate the *tarjama* with the ḥadīth that later were considered as *mutawātir*, "Convey from me even a sign, also narrate from children of Isrā'īl and there is no harm. He who tells lies about me on purpose will have to occupy a seat in Hell."<sup>763</sup>

Thus in a similar fashion to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the *tarājim* are Ibn Ḥibbān's attempt to convey to his readers juridical or philosophical ideas that must necessarily be linked to the body of the ḥadīth. All these *tarājim* are included in a specific framework, in which the ḥadīth are used to countenance his argumentations. On the other hand, *tarjama* appraises the reader for Ibn Ḥibbān's notion when he encounters a ḥadīth or other reports. In the wide illustrated image, each *tarjama* is followed by ḥadīth which are almost entirely composed of the citation of transmitted reports offered with *isnads*. The commentaries that appear after the ḥadīth are typically introduced by the formula *qāla Abū Ḥatim* (Abū Ḥatim [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). At the beginning of the *Majrūḥīn*, the first *tarjama*, ḥadīth and commentaries are as follows

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<sup>759</sup> The introduction of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* has been translated by Juynboll benefiting from the commentary by al-Nawawī. See, G. H. A. Juynboll, "Muslim's Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Translated and annotated with an excursus on the chronology of *fiṭnā* and *bid'a*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5, Jerusalem, 1984, 263-311.

<sup>760</sup> See S. R. Burge, "Reading between the Lines: The Compilation of Ḥadīth and the Authorial Voice", 171.

<sup>761</sup> *Bāb al-taghlīz fī al-kadhb 'alā Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Riyadh: Dar Tayba, 2006), 5.

<sup>762</sup> *Dhikr al-taghlīz fī al-kadhb 'alā Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam. Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/15.

<sup>763</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, "Muslim's Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*", 273.

<sup>764</sup> *Dhikr al-ḥath 'ala ḥifẓ al-sunan wa nashriḥā. See Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/14.

Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ‘Adī al-Nasā’ī narrated for us, he said: Ḥumayd b. Zanjūyah narrated for us, he said: Ya‘la b. ‘Ubayd narrated for us, he said: Muḥammad b. Ishāq narrated for us, from al-Zuhrī, from Muḥammad b. Jubayr b. Mu‘im, from his father, he said: The Messenger of Allāh – *ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam* – stood up at Khayf in Mina and said; “May Allāh brighten a man who hears my speech and he understands it, simultaneously he delivers it to those who could not hear it. Perhaps he who [thinks that he] understands does not really understand. And perhaps he who [thinks that he] understands conveys to one who understands more than him. Hatred does not enter the heart of the Muslim [because] of three things; sincerity of the deed, counsel to Muslim rulers, and adherence to the community. So indeed their invocation is to be answered.”<sup>765</sup>

Abū Ḥātim said;

The obligation of he who carries along the tools of knowledge is to honour the times for the Sunnah preservation, hoping to be with whoever the Prophet prayed. Then Allāh [The Owner] of Greatness and Reverence commands His slaves to follow His [Prophet’s] Sunnah, and the return to his path whenever there is disagreement, where He says: “And if you differ among yourselves concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger”.<sup>766</sup> Then He has denied the faith of those who do not rule it (Sunnah) in disputation between them as He says; “But no, by thy Lord, they will not believe until they have made thee the judge between them in their disputes, and find no resistance in their souls to what thou hast decreed, and surrender with full submission”.<sup>767</sup> He neither says until they have made so-and-so judge (*yuhakkimū*) between them in their disputes, nor He says so-and-so decides (*qaḍā*) what is to be decreed, but the order between Allāh and his creatures is merely the Messenger of Allāh – *ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam* –. Hence, do not nullify the heart that is admonished by the faith that he does not neglect the preservation of the Sunnah, as much as he can. He even returns [to the Sunna] during disputation about the word [of God], [the Prophet] “nor does he speak out of caprice. It is not but a revelation revealed.”<sup>768</sup> May Allāh made us among them through His gift.<sup>769</sup>

The next part shows Ibn Ḥibbān’s aim to support his argument on the authentication of ḥadīth in such a way that is scrutinized the transmitters. He uses the ḥadīth like, “he who transmits from me a ḥadīth which is considered to be a lie, he is one of the liars,”<sup>770</sup> and, “when a man transmits everything he has heard, that suffices to [be accused of] falsehood.”<sup>771</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that these aḥādīth demonstrate the emphasis of individual certainty in the authenticity of a ḥadīth. And this only can be known by scrutinizing the history and names of the reliable or impugned for the transmission of the prophet’s ḥadīth.<sup>772</sup> Subsequently, he set the minimum requirement for a ḥadīth to be constituted as a proof; (1)

<sup>765</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad*, 4/80. *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 231.

<sup>766</sup> The Qur’ān, 4:59.

<sup>767</sup> The Qur’ān, 4:65.

<sup>768</sup> The Qur’ān, 53:3.

<sup>769</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/14-15.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

<sup>771</sup> Ibid, 274.

<sup>772</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/17.

The solitary report of a [transmitter] reliable in his religion, (2) the [transmitter] renowned with honesty in his ḥadīth, (3) the [transmitter] sagacious by what he says, (4) the [transmitter] learned by which he discovers the meaning of the ḥadīth from the hidden expression.<sup>773</sup>

A lengthy discussion on the justification of the transmitters' evaluation shows how polemical the issue was in Ibn Ḥibbān's era. Undoubtedly, the dilemma over evaluating persona is not a point of agreement and is not germane among Muslim scholars. Ibn Ḥibbān deals with the justification of the obligation to evaluate transmitters and runs to eighteen pages in the printed text.<sup>774</sup> Consistently, he supplies proofs inducing from the Qur'ān or ḥadīth and also presents his predecessors' notions for the desirability of knowing the impugned transmitters. He offers a *tarjama*, "An account of information seeming to command the impugning of the weak."<sup>775</sup> The fact that Ibn Ḥibbān subsumes the impugned of transmitters under the imperative verb *al-'amr* (the commanding) is to demonstrate the responsibility of implementing this matter. He adds that there are innumerable evidences and examples in the Qur'ān or ḥadīth and all these are clearly represented as a command. For instance, Ibn Ḥibbān places the ḥadīth, "The prophet says: Oh Hassān,<sup>776</sup> reply for me. O Lord! Help him with *Rūḥ al-Quds* (the holy spirit)," and construes it as follows

In the report it seems to be proof for a command to impugn the weak because the Prophet says to Hassān: "Reply for me." Indeed, his command is to remove the polytheists' fabrication from him. So if because of the polytheists' fabrication the Messenger of Allāh commands that it be removed even though their lying does not harm the Muslims. They do not permit what is forbidden, and do not forbid what is permissible. If someone among the Muslims lies about the Messenger of Allāh in transmission to permit the forbidden and forbid the permissible, it is more appropriate to command the removal of the lie from him – *ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam* -.<sup>777</sup>

Furthermore, Ibn Ḥibbān delineates explicitly the objection along with the proof by his opposition in discussing the issue of transmitters' evaluation that could be equated as backbiting or slander.<sup>778</sup> He gives the following report from Abī Hurayra as an example for the forbiddance of backbiting

<sup>773</sup> *Khavar al-wāḥid al-thiqa fī dīnihi, al-ma'rūf bi-l-ṣidq fī ḥadīthihi, al-'āqil bimā yuḥaddithu bihi, al-'ālim bimā yuḥīlu ma'ānī al-ḥadīth min al-laḥẓ al-munsarī.* See, Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/17.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid, 1/18-36.

<sup>775</sup> *Dhikr khavar fīhi ka-l-'amr bi-l-jarḥ li-l-ḍu'afā'.* See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/19.

<sup>776</sup> Hassān b. Thābit. A discussion on him will follow in chapter five.

<sup>777</sup> Ibid.

<sup>778</sup> In the course of the justification of impugning the transmitters, it is common to see contemporary ḥadīth scholars proving with The Qur'ān, 49:6. "O you who believe! If an iniquitous person comes to you

What is backbiting? He [the prophet] said: Your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. [It was] said [to him]: What is your view about this if that I actually find it in my brother what I mention? He said: If it be in him, you already slander him, and if not in him, you accuse him [falsely].<sup>779</sup>

Not surprisingly, Ibn Ḥibbān attempts to counter the argument of the slander's controversy by advocating with another ḥadīth from 'Ā'isha

A man was approaching, and when the Prophet saw him, he said: "He is a bad member of the tribe – or - son of the tribe". Then when he came to the Prophet, he [the Prophet] gladly spoke to him, and when he passed 'Ā'isha said: "Oh Messenger of Allāh when you saw him you have said what you have said, but when he came [why did] you gladly speak to him?" [The Prophet] said: "Oh 'Ā'isha, indeed the worse of my *umma* in Allāh's estimation on the resurrection day is the person that people abandon, fearing his indecency."

Abū Ḥātim said;

In the report there is a proof about a report of a man and what kind of religiosity [he has] it is not a slander, as the Prophet said: He is a bad member of the tribe or a son of the tribe." If this is a slander (*ghība*) the Messenger of Allāh did not issue it. But indeed he intends with his statement to prepare the leaving of the indecency because he intends for his defamation (*thalb*). Indeed, the speaker intends with the slander to make an insult in his statement.

Our *Imāms* - may the mercy of God be on them -, indeed, they explain these matters and issue an impugned [criticism] upon non-reliable [transmitters] so that one does not prove [something] through their reports. They do not intend to criticise them and tell-tales on them. Reporting a matter is not a slander if the speaker intends other than defamation.

'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Bujayr b. Rāshid narrated for us, he said: 'Amr b. 'Alī narrated for us, he said: 'Affān narrated for us, he said: I was [in] the presence of Ismā'īl b. 'Ulayya, a transmitter related a man's ḥadīth. I said: "Do not transmit this. This [man's reliability] has not [yet] been established." Then [the transmitter] said: "You have slandered him!" Whereupon Ismā'īl said: "Not slandered him but I have pronounced the judgement that this [man's reliability] has not [yet] been established."<sup>780</sup>

However, in all of the arguments where Ibn Ḥibbān presents objections against those who reject the impugning of transmitters, he does not offer a single name of an individual or group. In justifying the issue of backbiting, Ibn Ḥibbān deals with various terms like *ghība*, *thalb*, *qadh*, *jarḥ*, and *waqī'a*. It is unmistakably the question that Ibn Ḥibbān was concerned

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with tidings, then be discerning, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become remorseful over that which you have done". For instance, see 'Abd al-'Azīz, *Ḍawābit al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, 27.

<sup>779</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/23; See also *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 13/72.

<sup>780</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/24

with, then, is: How can a report by a person be true if someone cannot be evaluated? The only way of knowing that these aḥādīth are authentic is through continuous transmission through reliable transmitters. Ibn Ḥibbān's analogy, we have noted, maintains that if a judge needs to call a character witness (*mu'addil*) to testify for the probity of the two witnesses in court, it is more deserving to evaluate a transmitter who relates a ḥadīth.<sup>781</sup> Hence the fundamental principle of explicitly declaring the defamatory condition of someone's personality is in fact employed by Ibn Ḥibbān as an obligation and is not to be considered as reprehensible slander.<sup>782</sup>

Moreover, behind all the justifications of the transmitters' evaluation found in the *Majrūḥīn* and other works of ḥadīth scholars there exist similar issues pertaining to the status of the Companions. On this point, analyses by Lucas,<sup>783</sup> Juynboll,<sup>784</sup> Brown,<sup>785</sup> Dickinson,<sup>786</sup> Osman,<sup>787</sup> and many others have shown that there is a very lengthy debate among early Muslim scholars about the question of the collective probity of the Companions. As Osman has pointed out, Ibn Ḥibbān and his contemporaries of the fourth/tenth century are those who contribute to develop epistemological basis for the doctrine.<sup>788</sup> They treat it as an articulation of faith but not crystallized yet in their time. And towards the end of this epistemological discussion in the *Majrūḥīn*, Ibn Ḥibbān discouraged the questioning of collective probity by his opponents. The question put by Ibn Ḥibbān epitomizes what lies behind the collective probity of the Companions

If someone says, "How could you impugn those who came after the Companions and yet you refuse [to impugn] the Companions, even though negligence and the error were found among the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh just as was found among the transmitters who came after them?" He is answered, "God declared the Companions of Messenger of Allāh to be above the defamation of any slander. He protected them from the disparagement of any detractor and made them like guiding stars."<sup>789</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān believes that the Qur'ān and ḥadīth have emphasized the Companions merits and their religious superiority. He insists that the Companions cannot be liable to

<sup>781</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/25.

<sup>782</sup> Tarīf Khalīdī, "Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment", 59.

<sup>783</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 221-285.

<sup>784</sup> G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 192-201.

<sup>785</sup> Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, 85.

<sup>786</sup> Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdīm of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)*, 120-123.

<sup>787</sup> Amr Osman, "'Adālat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine," 272.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid, 284.

<sup>789</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/35-36.

disparagement, thus they are dissimilar from other generations of transmitters. The Prophet himself gives an assurance of their integrity and God declared that on the Day of Judgement He would not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him.<sup>790</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān continues that the Companions take over the duty from the Prophet and God commissions them with His exposition to mankind. Hence, disparaging them is at variance with faith, for the Prophet would not have trusted them with revelation if he thought that they were not sincere and trustworthy witnesses.<sup>791</sup> However, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥibbān unequivocally acknowledges that the Companions intermittently do not mention the names of their intermediaries,<sup>792</sup> and made mistakes in transmission.<sup>793</sup> But he declares that there was no harm in accepting ḥadīth from the Companions even when they did not state their direct audition from the Prophet. Ibn Ḥibbān also states that the Companions, like other transmitters, *lam yakūnū bima 'ṣūmīn* (“were not infallible.”)<sup>794</sup> He writes,

We accepted the reports of the Companions from the Prophet so long as they related them from the Prophet, even if they did not show audition in all of what they related – and we know for certain that one of them sometimes heard a report from another Companion and related it from the Prophet without mentioning the person from whom he heard it – because they are all reliable, leading, and sovereign authorities. God declared the likes of the Companions to be above weakness being attached to them.<sup>795</sup>

The next part of the introduction is a synopsis of the history of ḥadīth criticism. The practises of stating the *tarjama* was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān for establishing his notion. He builds up a network which connects ḥadīth criticism to prominent scholars or critics from preceding generations, that is to say *ṭabaqāt*. As Lucas indicated, “Ibn Ḥibbān’s *ṭabaqāt* presentation in *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn* is the most useful *ṭabaqāt* presentation for this project because it includes a description of the activities of the seven generations of scholars.”<sup>796</sup> The critics included in the *Majrūḥīn* cover a period of about two centuries and a half, the

<sup>790</sup> “The Day when God will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe with him”. The Qur’ān, 66:8.

Ibn Ḥibbān also supports with another *ayat* from The Qur’ān, 3:68. “Truly the people worthiest of Abraham are those who followed him, and this prophet and those who believe. And God is the Protector of the Believers”. Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/36.

<sup>791</sup> Osman also points this argument, “as for those who witnessed the Revelation and accompanied the Messenger, disparaging them is not lawful, abusing them contradicts faith, and abasing any of them is hypocrisy, for they are the best generation of all people after the Messenger of God.” See Amr Osman, “Adālat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine”, 283.

<sup>792</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/161. This point is also analysed in Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 120-123.

<sup>793</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/153.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid, 1/161-162.

<sup>796</sup> Lucas also gives a different interpretation of these passages, see Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 119.

earliest being the second caliph ‘Umar and the latest Abū Zur‘a al-Rāzī (d. 264/878). Ibn Ḥibbān yields about forty-three names of critics and indicates some of the geographical areas of their activities, but does not give either birthdates or death dates.

For each of the seven *ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān lays out a general characterization and proper method of the critics. The selection of critics reflects his notion that ḥadīth criticism started as early as the era of Companions and their practise had been imitated by the following generations.<sup>797</sup> Firstly, under the *tarjama* “(An account on who is the first to protect the Messenger from fabrications),”<sup>798</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān declares that ‘Umar was the pioneer in this practise.<sup>799</sup> ‘Umar instructed his fellow Companions to refrain from ḥadīth transmission in the interest of studying the Qur’ān. Asserting a report that ‘Umar used to compare statements by the Companions, Ibn Ḥibbān suggests that ‘Umar did not suspect the Companions but simply desired to set a model of scrutinizing the identity of ḥadīth transmitters. Besides ‘Umar, Ibn Ḥibbān states that ‘Alī was among the earliest who merely scrutinized the transmitters in the transmission and searched about the transference of the report.<sup>800</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān terms the next generation of critics as *jamā‘a min ahl madīna min sādāt al-tābi‘īn* (a group of leading Successors among people of the Madinah) whom followed in the footsteps of the Companions in preserving, travelling, scrutinizing, understanding and disseminating the Sunna.<sup>801</sup> In a reasonable manner Ibn Ḥibbān maintains that the model of the disposition of the Prophet’s knowledge remained in Madinah during the first century of the *hijra*. This also was the model adopted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim for his *ṭabaqāt*.<sup>802</sup> It is well known in the first/seventh century that Madinah retained its centrality as its preceding scholars had a greater knowledge and brought in intellectual currents from the rest of the

<sup>797</sup> This also could be interpreted that Ibn Ḥibbān’s view of the practise of identifying transmitter began earlier before the *fiṭnā*.

<sup>798</sup> *Dhikr awwal man waqqā al-kadhb ‘alā Rasūl*.

<sup>799</sup> *Fa-‘amada ‘Umar ilā al-Thiqāt al-mutqinīn alladhīna shahidu al-wahy wa-l-tanzīl* (Umar resorts to the excellent reliables whom witness the Revelation and the Qur’ān). See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/38; A’zami moves a bit earlier in the case of the pioneer in ḥadīth criticism. He considers the first Caliph Abū Bakr was the pioneer in this field. See M. M. A’zami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, 66.

<sup>800</sup> *Wa hadhāni awwal man fattashā ‘an al-rijāl fī al-riwāya, wa baḥathā ‘an al-naql fī al-akhbār*. See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/39.

<sup>801</sup> *Fajiddū fī ḥifẓ al-sunan wa al-riḥla fīhā wa-l-taftīsh ‘anha wa-l-tafaqquh fīhā wa luzūm al-dīn, wa wa ‘ūh ‘alā al-muslimīn*. See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/40.

<sup>802</sup> Wheeler uses Ibn Abi Ḥātim’s *Ṭabaqāt* and explains, “The authority of each successive generation is dependent on the authority of the generation immediately preceding it, which is an interpretation of the revelation contained in the Qur’ān.” See Brannon Wheeler, *Applying the Canon in Islam: The Authorization and Maintenance of Interpretive Reasoning in Hanafī Scholarship*, (Albany, 1996), 82-91.

Muslim world.<sup>803</sup> And among the critics of this generation that Ibn Ḥibbān included was ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, the patron of “Madinan School of History” i.e. the *maghāzi* school of Madinah.<sup>804</sup>

The lineage continues with the inclusion of ‘Urwa’s student, al-Zuhrī whom Ibn Ḥibbān explicitly declared the greatest scholar of his generation. The amount of space devoted to al-Zuhrī’s testimonial evidences speaks for itself. Ibn Ḥibbān adds that al-Zuhrī’s virtues are discussed at more length in his *Kitāb al-‘Ilāl*. Most unfortunately, the book has not come down to us. Ibn Ḥibbān says that al-Zuhrī and his contemporaries are a generation which tracked the ways, selected the men, and travelled for gathering the Sunnah.<sup>805</sup> Comparatively, this third generation includes four additional Madinian scholars.

To the greatest extent, the fourth generation of critics is the most celebrated in Ibn Ḥibbān’s genealogy of ḥadīth criticism. Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that this generation not only preserved the material and techniques of their teachers, but invented the practices of transmitter criticism and declaring weak transmitters to be unreliable.<sup>806</sup> The eight men (Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, Shu‘ba, al-Awzā‘ī, Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna) are described as being a “group of Imams of the Muslim and jurists of religion”. Ibn Ḥibbān explicitly credits Mālik, Shu‘ba, and Sufyān al-Thawri with the transformation of general ḥadīth criticism into a craft.<sup>807</sup> He also supplies the report of certain scholars’ geographical areas that cements particular places as a ḥadīth centre in the second/eight century. This generation famously inspired the creation of the *madhhab* in Islamic law and Mālik’s *al-Muwatṭā’* continues to be venerated by Sunni scholars of all schools of law to this day. Four salient features characterize the fifth generation; the design in the ḥadīth, the investigation of the transmitters, the identification of the weak, and the scrutinizing of the transmission reasons.<sup>808</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān explains,

Except for Yahyā b. Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī (who with the duty of religion, extreme devotion, and comprehension the Sunnah) who investigate the most about the transmitters’ state, and who are the most [willing] to leave the

<sup>803</sup> Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law*, 15.

<sup>804</sup> See ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 76.

<sup>805</sup> *Tatabbu’ al-ṭuruq, wa-i-ntihā’ al-rijāl, wa raḥal fī jam’ al-sunan*. Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn*, 1/40.

<sup>806</sup> *Intiqād al-rijāl, wa ḥifẓ al-sunan wa-l-qadh fī al-du‘afā’*. Ibid, 1/41.

<sup>807</sup> *Ḥattā ja ‘alū dhālika šinā’at lahum*. Ibid, 1/41.

<sup>808</sup> *Al-rasm fī al-ḥadīth, wa-l-tanqīr ‘an al-rijāl, wa-l-taftīsh ‘an al-du‘afā, wa-l-baḥth ‘an asbāb al-naql*. Ibid, 1/49.



weak and the rejected [transmitters] to the point that they made this practise into a craft.<sup>809</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān moves to the sixth generation and makes room for seven “Imams” who fortify this craft and reached an even higher level of scrutiny and clarification. In this particular part, Ibn Ḥibbān quotes ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī’s list which consists of the most important list of early ḥadīth scholars who can be considered as indispensable figures in conjunction with their distinctive ḥadīth centres.<sup>810</sup> According to Juynboll, this list gives a perfect overall view of the earliest development of ḥadīth.<sup>811</sup> As asserted by Lucas, “‘Alī b. al-Madīnī’s list enjoys the distinction of being both the earliest and most widely cited list in both Muslim and non-Muslim works”.<sup>812</sup> The pinnacle of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *ṭabaqāt* conclusion was the seventh generation who perpetuated the report criticism and the transmitter selection. The characterization of this generation is that they not only scrutinized the transmitters but practised *matn* criticism.<sup>813</sup> Below is a table of forty-three critics who have been mentioned by Ibn Ḥibbān:

Table 4: Ibn Ḥibbān’s List of Critics

Generation	List of Critics	Death Dates
The Companions	1. ‘Umar, 2. ‘Alī, 3. Ibn ‘Abbās.	23/644 40/661 67/687
The Madinian Followers	1. Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib, 2. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr, 3. Sālim b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar 4. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, 5. Abū Salama b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, 6. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Utba, 7. Khārija b. Zayd b. Thābit, 8. ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr al-‘Awwām, 9. Abū Bakr b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām,	93/711 106/724 106/724 93/711 94/712 98/717 100/718 94/712 95/713

<sup>809</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/49.

<sup>810</sup> Ibid, 1/52-53.

<sup>811</sup> Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 164.

<sup>812</sup> Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 114.

<sup>813</sup> *Al-intiqad fī al-akhbar wa-ntiqa al-rijāl fī al-athar*. Ibn Hibban, *al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/54.

	10. Sulayman b. Yasar,	104/722
The Third Generation	1. Al-Zuhrī, 2. Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī, 3. Hishām b. ʿUrwa 4. Saʿd b. Ibrāhīm	124/741 143/760 146/763 125/742
The Fourth Generation	1. Sufyān b. Saʿīd al-Thawrī, 2. Mālik b. Anas, 3. Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj 4. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr al-Awzāʿī, 5. Ḥammād b. Salama, 6. al-Layth b. Saʿd, 7. Ḥammād b. Zayd, 8. Sufyān b. ʿUyayna	161/778 179/795 160/776 157/774 167/784 175/791 179/795 198/813
The Fifth Generation	1. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, 2. Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, 3. Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāh, 4. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Mahdī, 5. Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Maṭlabī al-Shāfiʿī	181/797 198/813 197/813 198/814 204/820
The Sixth Generation	1. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 2. Yahyā b. Maʿīn, 3. ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, 4. Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba, 5. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥanzalī (Ibn Rāhawayh) 6. ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Qawārīrī, 7. Zuhayr b. Ḥarb, Abū Khaythama	241/855 233/848 234/849 235/849 238/853 235/849 234/848
The Seventh Generation	1. Muḥammad b. Yahyā al-Dhuhlī al-Naysabūrī, 2. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī, 3. Abū Zurʿa ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Yazīd al-Rāzī, 4. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Juʿfī al-Bukhārī,	258/871 255/869 264/878 256/870

	5. Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Naysabūrī,	261/874
	6. Abū Dawūd Sulayman b. al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistānī.	275/888

In general, the significance of Ibn Ḥibbān’s seven-*ṭabaqāt* presentation is understandable from the author’s insightful descriptions of the members of each generation as well as the identification and biographical information of the forty-three men. Additionally, the inclusion of the Companions’ generation in the list of critics offers an interpretation that the number of critics is not limited. Ibn Ḥibbān usually used the word *minhum* (that could be translated as ‘among them’) before specifying the name of critics in each generation.<sup>814</sup> And it is also noteworthy that Ibn Ḥibbān included the Companions in the history of ḥadīth criticism. For this inclusion, it was emphasized that the Companions practised the scrutiny of whoever related a ḥadīth. Consequently, the result was that slander of a person has no place since the earliest stage of Islam.

And throughout the epistemological arguments, it is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān did not intend to do more than stress the role of transmitters’ evaluation in the proper interpretation to be accorded to the ḥadīth. Presumably, all the ḥadīth in his arguments are available in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and as in this case, he included materials that had satisfied his requirement for inclusion.<sup>815</sup> But this inclusion was the basis of criticism by al-Dāraquṭnī, as Ibn Ḥibbān’s ḥadīth was scrutinized for containing problematic *isnad*. Although differences of opinion still exist, a ḥadīth quoted involved a process of authentication stage before its content was confirmed or not as a proof. This issue, it should be noted, was raised only with regard to ḥadīth, the authenticity of which was upon. Understanding the sphere and ramifications of al-Dāraquṭnī’s critique of the ḥadīth in the *Majrūḥīn*’s introduction requires a conceptual review of the manner in which Ibn Ḥibbān recorded and demonstrated the ḥadīth.<sup>816</sup>

#### 4.4 Ibn Ḥibbān on *Rijāl* Criticism

To make the case that *rijāl* criticism in the structured display, Ibn Ḥibbān abbreviates a wide variety of transmitted material in a framework determined by his conception of transmitters’ evaluation. While the epistemological discussions and *ṭabaqāt* presentation that we

<sup>814</sup> As scrutinized by Lucas, about ninety-two names are mentioned between from the first/seventh to the fourth/tenth century. See Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam*, 114.

<sup>815</sup> This is based on footnote supplied by Ḥamdī through Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Majrūḥīn*.

<sup>816</sup> Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-Ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāruquṭnī’s Adjustment of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*”, 7.

articulated in the previous section relied exclusively upon the introduction of the *Majrūhīn*, this topic of Ibn Ḥibbān's *rijāl* criticism also involves studying his comments in the introduction to the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The present section emphasizes those aspects of *rijāl* criticism which link it most closely to the context in which it was written and Ibn Ḥibbān's general principles. For Ibn Ḥibbān, the study of *rijāl* should also flourish, especially since the master craft of *rijāl* criticism can attain control as well as consummate his knowledge of Islam. When one is able to authenticate a ḥadīth with knowledge of *rijāl* he or she avoids misleading interpretations. Hence the growing interest in the actual critical appraisal of transmitters is that this imposing body of material was perceived to be capable of authenticating ḥadīth on the basis of criteria drawn from the domain of *rijāl* criticism.<sup>817</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān quotes extensively from the early biographical dictionaries, which deal with all the impugned transmitters in ḥadīth transmission and provide evaluative judgements as to their relative worth, often comparing one against the other. 'Adab's study attempts to compare Ibn Ḥibbān's evaluation with the works of others and his generation of critics like Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Dāraqūṭnī and others. However, he states the difficulties in tracing the origin of Ibn Ḥibbān's quotations about early critics regarding the absence of *isnād* in their statements.<sup>818</sup> From the previous section we understand that the second/eight and third/ninth century generations have produced a plethora of works in *rijāl* criticism and their testimonials or statements about transmitters scattered in ḥadīth collections, *tārīkh*, *ʿilal*, and other biographical dictionaries. Assigning back their statements to the source certainly requires a large of comparative study.

In the introduction of the *Majrūhīn* and the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥibbān justifies the employment of *rijāl* criticism in his own day on basis of the precedent set by prestigious scholars of earlier generations. These works were a technical criticism in which Ibn Ḥibbān contributed his own methodology of transmitters' evaluation based on those of the early critics whom he studied.<sup>819</sup> One can speak in an ordinary historical sense about the origins and sources of the works of any critic because critics receive information directly and were influenced by their teachers. In the case of Ibn Ḥibbān, also, his primary source is his ḥadīth teachers received either by reading or listening. Generally, Ibn Ḥibbān tends to be more forthright in his assessment of characters, preferring to quote his predecessors' evaluation in

<sup>817</sup> Bernard Weiss, "Language and Tradition in Medieval Islam", 99.

<sup>818</sup> 'Adab al-Hamsh, *al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī wa manhajuhu fī al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*. M.A. dissertation, Umm al-Qura University, 712.

<sup>819</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Critical Rigor vs. Juridical Pragmatism", 20.

this regard and then making comments. This is probably due either to religious conscience or not directly facing the transmitter or both.<sup>820</sup>

In the wake of the above argumentation, what emerged from Ibn Ḥibbān's materials, methods and conclusions for establishing a transmitter reproduced on a large scale is a combination of his own evaluation with that of his sources. His writings become an important posture of the science of ḥadīth transmission where his evaluations and examples are repeatedly quoted by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Ḥajar and others that belong to the later developments of *rijāl* criticism.<sup>821</sup> However, it is quite characteristic to find later critics speaking in high praise of Ibn Ḥibbān's evaluation and at the same time to find others who value it less highly. In *rijāl* criticism it is common to find some evaluations of *rijāl* who are considered "authorities" by some, and "worthless," or at least ambiguous, by others. Nevertheless, taken together Ibn Ḥibbān's introductions and his successors quotations', indicate general influence of Ibn Ḥibbān's notions on the transmitter's virtues. And as it might be seen in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥibbān pays particular attention to the conception of the transmitter's virtues, not only because of the complexity of the subject, but also because he sought to differ from some of his predecessors views as well as to establish his own idea.<sup>822</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān dedicates a certain amount of treatment to what may be termed "minimum requirement of a transmitter".

Apart from transmitters' classifications, there are systematic descriptions with clearly discernible requirements. Those general terms that relate to virtues of transmitters which need elucidation are; 1) *al-ʿadl* (probity), 2) *al-ṣidq* (trustworthiness), 3) *al-ʿaql* (intelligence), 4) *al-ʿilm* (knowledgeable), 5) *al-mutaʿarrī* (does not contain) *al-tadlīs* (concealed omissions in the *isnād*).<sup>823</sup> So one can see clearly the virtues most admired by Ibn Ḥibbān. The term *ʿadl* is used either in the general sense of probity, which implies conformity with the law, or as a necessary qualification for being a witness. It also signifies

<sup>820</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment", 64.

<sup>821</sup> In *ʿIlal al-Mutanāhiya*, Ibn al-Jawzī quotes extensively from the *Majrūḥīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān which deals with the reason of weakness of ḥadīth. For example, Ibn al-Jawzī cites "Ibn Ḥibbān says: 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far recking the ḥadīth and coming with its inversion and he wrong." Ibn al-Jawzī's transmission would also seem to depict the relation between al-Dāraquṭnī and Ibn Ḥibbān. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-ʿIlal al-Mutanāhiya fī al-Aḥādīth al-Wāhiya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1983), 1/19.

<sup>822</sup> Majid Khadduri, *Shāfiʿī's Risāla*, 24.

<sup>823</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān says: "As for our conditions regarding the transmitters of the ḥadīth placed in our book, indeed, we have not placed in this book other than transmissions in which every transmitter has met five requirements; (1) *al-ʿAdāla* (righteous conduct) and magnificently concealed [from misdeed] in the religion. (2) *al-Ṣidq* (trustworthy) and familiar [student] in the ḥadīth. (3) *al-ʿAql* (rational) when he transmits the ḥadīth. (4) *al-ʿilm* (Knowledge) about the meaning of what he is transmitting. (5) *al-Mutaʿarrī* (Uninhabited) with the *tadlīs* (concealed omissions in the *isnād*)". See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/151.

probity or uprightness of character; the minimum requirement of this is that he must be reliable regarding his religion.<sup>824</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that when someone is well known for his dignity and there is no criticism of impugning on him, then he is considered a reliable transmitter.<sup>825</sup> It is necessary, Ibn Ḥibbān argues that a person should be considered *‘ādil* when he is righteous and this outweighs his misbehaviour, for sinless persons do not exist.<sup>826</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates precisely the concept of *‘adāla*

Most of his circumstances are obeying Allāh. So that is when we can establish an upright [transmitter] who is free from error in any circumstance. If we have accomplished that, hence no-one upright in this world. It is because people are not free from disturbances of the devil in their circumstances. Yet the upstanding [transmitter] is the person whose apparent circumstances are obeying Allāh, and he who contravenes the upstanding is the person whose circumstances are disobeying Allāh.<sup>827</sup>

Most importantly, Ibn Ḥibbān says that the trustworthiness (*al-ṣidq*) of a transmitter can only be established by those who are versed in the art of ḥadīth.<sup>828</sup> Even the views of a scholar’s neighbours and fellow townsmen are immaterial in determining his trustworthiness as a transmitter.<sup>829</sup> Next the description of *al-‘aql* connotes a transmitter who acquires an intelligence in language and then transmits ḥadīth in accord with his language considering the text has preserved the meanings of the Sunnah.<sup>830</sup> The intellect of Ibn Ḥibbān’s transmitter is would be more closely approximate the practical intellect not the philosopher’s reason or the theoretical intellect.<sup>831</sup> There are clearly mental and moral overtones to this intellect as he insists that a transmitter must also fathom the art of ḥadīth, in other words he does not support the halted ḥadīth (*yusnidu mawqūfan*),<sup>832</sup> or raise the loose ḥadīth (*yarfa ‘u mursalan*),<sup>833</sup> or falsify the name (*yusahhifu ‘sman*).

<sup>824</sup> Majid Khadduri, *Shāfi‘ī’s Risāla*, 29.

<sup>825</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, 1/13.

<sup>826</sup> However, Ibn Ḥajar criticized Ibn Ḥibbān in regards to his conception of dignity. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzan*, 1/14-15.

<sup>827</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/152

<sup>828</sup> *al-ṣidq fī-l-ḥadīth bi-l-shuhra fīhī*. Ibid.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid; See also Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 90.

<sup>830</sup> This statement shows that Ibn Ḥibbān agrees with the sort of transmission at best approximates the meaning of the original of ḥadīth. In other term it is called *riwāya bi-l-ma‘nā* but was controversial whether it be considered as a reliable means of preserving the Sunna. See Gregor Schoeler, “Writing and Publishing on the Use and Function of Writing in the First Centuries of Islam”, *Arabica* T. 44, Fasc. 3, Jul. 1997, 423-435.

<sup>831</sup> Leonard T. Librande, “The Need to Know: Al-‘Ajurrī’s Kitāb Fard Talab al-Ilm”, in *Bulletin d’etudes orientales*, T. 45 (1993), 89-159.

<sup>832</sup> Literally, it means ‘raised up’. The halted ḥadīth is the one which is transmitted from the Companions. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *al-Muqaddima*, 33.

<sup>833</sup> The loose ḥadīth is the one which is transmitted from an early Follower. Ibid, 39.

*Al-‘aql* and *al-‘ilm* are very much alike discussed in this context. The knowledgeable transmitter understands *fiqh* in order to transmit and to shorten ḥadīth in a well-informed manner. This signifies that, after the transmitter has received ḥadīth for himself, he acquires an understanding of it and then transmits in accord with his language and knowledge. Certainly Ibn Ḥibbān's notion of intellectual transmitter clearly represents his agreement with the concept of *riwāya bi-l-ma‘nā* (transmission according to meaning). It is a basic decision of a transmitter whether he confines himself to transmitting *matn* literally or whether he analyse it in his own language. Thus, debates between ḥadīth scholars about the correct recitation of the text of ḥadīth were raised as to whether the reproduction of a tradition's meaning was sufficient or whether it had to be *riwāya bi-l-lafẓ* (verbatim transmission).<sup>834</sup> However, according to Nūr al-Dīn, the majority of Muslim scholars including the four madhhabs agreed with the reproduction of a narration's meaning so long as its transmitter is well-known in the ḥadīth scholarship.<sup>835</sup>

Another major criterion is that a transmitter's report does not contain *al-tadlīs* (concealed omissions in the *isnād*). *Dallasa* means "to conceal a fault in an article of merchandise," hence it was used for transmitters concealing deficiencies in *isnāds*.<sup>836</sup> Principally, *al-tadlīs* consisted of misleading others about the immediate source of one's ḥadīth.<sup>837</sup> The responsibility of the transmitter is to mention his/her immediate source and face-to-face transmission, which defines a central expression of the transmitter's personal source. By means of this the transmitter is known as having heard ḥadīth directly and personally. Ibn Ḥibbān summarized his ideas; "since he (a transmitter) was known to have resorted to *tadlīs*, his ḥadīth only deserve to be taken into consideration when he explicitly says that he has heard them in person."<sup>838</sup> Altogether this shows that a man accused of *tadlīs* could be considered reliable when in a certain *isnād* he appeared to have been mentioned clearly as having "heard" the ḥadīth in person, for which the technical term *samā‘* was coined.

<sup>834</sup> Gregor Schoeler, "Writing and Publishing on the Use and Function of Writing in the First Centuries of Islam," 431.

<sup>835</sup> Nūr al-Dīn 'Itr, *Manhaj al-naqd fī ulūm al-ḥadīth*, 227. Mahmoud Ayoub says that "modern scholars who argue for approximate meaning rather than precise transmission do so on the basis of the fact that early grammarians did not cite prophetic ḥadīth as proof texts in their studies of the Arabic language". See, Mahmoud Ayoub, "Muhammad the Prophet" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography (Arabic Literary Culture 500/925)*, ed. Cooperson, Toorawa, (US: Thomson Gale, 2005), 311/278.

<sup>836</sup> Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 179.

<sup>837</sup> A discourse of *tadlīs* can be discerned in two contexts; *Tadlīs al-isnād* entails a student transmitting something from a teacher with whom he had studied but from whom he had not actually heard that particular report. Secondly, *tadlīs al-shaykh* could involve a student obfuscating the identity of his source. See Ibn Hajar, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mudallisin*, (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Husayniyya, 1322), 3. See also Jonathan Brown, *Canonization of Bukharī and Muslim*, 283.

<sup>838</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/161. See also Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 181-182.

According to Ibn Ḥibbān, a transmitter should have “heard” (*samāʿ*) the ḥadīth from the intermediaries who must also fulfil all the previous requirements. He asserts that if someone known to commit *tadlīs* (called a *mudallis*) does not say: “*samiʿtu* (I heard)” or “*ḥaddathanī* (he narrated for me),” his transmission is to be regarded as problematic. This is due to a possibility of the *mudallis* transmitting from a weak person whose inclusion made the authority of the report void (if the identity of weak person was known and the report ascribed to him).<sup>839</sup> Hence Ibn Ḥibbān’s resolution was based on an overall investigation of the technical terms known to denote face-to-face transmission or the formula (*samiʿtu* or *ḥaddathanā* or *akhbaranā* etc.) portraying the transmission between the two transmitters in all of the *isnād*.<sup>840</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān also provides some list of transmitters who committed *tadlīs* like Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Qatāda b. Diʿāma (d. 117/735), Abū Ishāq ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sabīʿī (d. 127/745), ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr (d. 136/753), ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Jurayj (d. 150/767), Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash (d. 148/765), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778).<sup>841</sup> From this list we find that the term *tadlīs* was already applied to successors or first/seventh century transmitters. Yet in one of the *Majrūḥīn*’s entries there is material that demonstrates viewpoints, methods, and analysis for *mudallis*. Ibn Ḥibbān’s interest in the alleged *mudallis* transmitter Baqiyya b. al-Walīd al-Ḥimṣī (d. 197/812) was stimulated after he found Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s admission that he had misjudged in evaluation that Baqiyya related forged ḥadīth only from unknown transmitters. But later Ibn Ḥibbān considered that Baqiyya also transmitted forged ḥadīth from reliable transmitters. To analyse the accusation of Baqiyya’s *tadlīs*, Ibn Ḥibbān collected all the transmissions of his students and scrutinized them. This to the largest extant was determined by the convergence of the lines of transmission. His

<sup>839</sup> See also Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 107.

<sup>840</sup> Ibn Ḥajar discusses five levels of *mudallis*:

1. Those who are known to do it occasionally, such as ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr and Muslim, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collector. He includes 33 persons in this category.
2. Those who are accepted by critics either because of their good reputation and relatively few cases of *tadlīs*, such as the famous al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Sufyān al-Thawrī, or because they reported from authentic authorities only, like Sufyān b. ʿUyayna. He includes 33 persons also in this category.
3. Those who practised *tadlīs* in a great deal. Critics have accepted only such aḥādīth from them which were reported with a clear mention of hearing directly. Among them are Abū Zubayr al-Makkī and al-Ḥasan b. Dhakwān. However, still opinions differ regarding whether their ḥadīth are acceptable or not. Ibn Ḥajar includes 50 persons in this category.
4. Perhaps it is similar to the previous level, but critics agree that their ḥadīth are to be rejected unless they clearly admit of their face-to-face transmission, such as Baqiyya b. al-Walīd and Ḥajjāj b. Artah. He includes 12 persons in this category.
5. Those who are disparaged due to another reason apart from *tadlīs*; their aḥaddith are rejected, even though they admit of hearing them directly. In total, Ibn Ḥajar supplies about 152 names for all categories. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mudallisīn*, 4-22.

<sup>841</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/154.



arguments are set forth in a systematic manner and carried to their plausible conclusions as he says

Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal] did not [carefully] examine him, but he only looked at some forged ḥadīth related from him from reliable folk and rejected them. According to my findings, he is hasty in rejection! For something even worse than this<sup>842</sup> there is no reason to impugn the reliability of a person in ḥadīth. I entered Homs and my greatest concern was Baqiyya’s case. I tracked down his ḥadīth and I copied the notes [of his students] in their entirety. I tracked the transmission of [his] early [students] which I did not find [at first] with short *isnāds*. Hence I saw that he was reliable, but he was *mudallis* (someone who altered *isnād*). He heard some ḥadīth in a correct manner from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar, Shu‘ba and Mālik. Then he heard [some ḥadīth] ascribed to ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar, Shu‘ba and Mālik from rejected and weak liars, like al-Mujāshi‘ b. ‘Amr, al-Sārī b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, ‘Umar b. Musā al-Mithāmī, others of their ilk and some people known only by their *kunyas*. [He] related [the ḥadīth] that he heard from these weak transmitters as coming directly from those reliable scholars he had seen. He used to say, “‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar from Nāfi’” and “Mālik from Nāfi’,” etc. [His students] transmitted [the material] from Baqiyya [directly] from Malik and the feeble transmitter was omitted from between [Baqiyya and Mālik]. As a consequence, the forged ḥadīth were attributed to Baqiyya and the [real] forger was omitted from in between. In reality, Baqiyya was taxed with some students who used to omit [the names of] the weak transmitters from [the *isnāds* of] his ḥadīth and transmitted them without the weak transmitters. So all of that [forging] was attributed to him.<sup>843</sup>

As mentioned earlier, it is established in the science of ḥadīth transmission that a ḥadīth by *mudallis* may not be relied upon if the *mudallis* does not state clearly the manner in which he received it, as is true of Baqiyya b. al-Walīd.<sup>844</sup> In this case, Ibn Ḥibbān produces three steps in a methodology for evaluating ḥadīth. The first is Ibn Ḥibbān’s attempt to collect all the transmissions of what came to be known as Baqiyya’s ḥadīth. The second is his recognition that Baqiyya’s intermediaries led to the source of forgery. Finally, Ibn Ḥibbān concluded that Baqiyya only passed on the forgeries of his intermediaries and did not forge the ḥadīth himself. However, because he and his students often omitted (*tadlīs*) the names of the weak transmitters from their *isnāds*, it appeared at first glance that he was personally responsible for the forging.<sup>845</sup>

Another issue discussed by Ibn Ḥibbān that relates to the transmitter’s reliability in transmitting ḥadīth was the person who embraced what ḥadīth critics considered the rejected

<sup>842</sup> This; i.e. Ibn Ḥanbal’s rejection of Baqiyya

<sup>843</sup> *Al-Majrūhīn*, 1/229. This passage is also translated in Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 87.

<sup>844</sup> Kamaruddin Amin, “Naṣiruddin Al-Albānī on Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ: A Critical Study of His Method”, in *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2004), 154.

<sup>845</sup> Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 87.

doctrinal sects, such as Shiite, Mu‘tazilite, Kharijite, Qadarite, Murjiites, and others. Ibn Ḥibbān says, “according to our authorities, it is absolutely forbidden to cite the ḥadīth of a *da‘iya* (proselytizer) for sectarian doctrines. I do not know of any disagreement among them on this point.”<sup>846</sup> Then Ibn Ḥibbān declared that one could accept aḥādīth from any “heretical” transmitter provided he was not an extremist and did not actively try to convert others to his beliefs. The main idea underlying this dictum is that it appears Ibn Ḥibbān was willing to consider for someone known for his tenderness in promoting a certain sectarian. In a few words if a transmitter transmits ḥadīth from his teacher, critics like Ibn Ḥibbān had little interest in his beliefs or practises. Drawing on Ibn Ḥibbān’s conclusion, Brown states

In theory, this meant that one could accept ḥadīths from Shiite transmitters as long as they did not engage in virulently anti-Sunni practise such as cursing Abu Bakr or Umar or transmit ḥadīths that seemed to preach the Shiite message.<sup>847</sup>

Furthermore, as we shall see, establishing the transmitter’s reliability was not accomplished due to his personal belief or character but it was based almost entirely on his materials. Although the pinnacle period of *rijāl* criticism is relatively a century before Ibn Ḥibbān’s era, Ibn Ḥibbān continued to re-examine or reconcile existing opinions on earlier transmitters based upon their aḥādīth. The analysis of the body of transmitter’s transmissions for corroboration that determined his *dabt* (accuracy) and thus his grade. These are matters which Ibn Ḥibbān took up in his analysis; was its transmitter alone in transmitting it or not? Is it well known or not? In his terminology, the term “*al-i‘tibār*” (consideration) is used in the process of searching for different *isnād* of a ḥadīth.<sup>848</sup> In the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the process

Ḥammād b. Salama relates an unparalleled ḥadīth from Ayyūb from Ibn Sīrīn from Abī Hurayra from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is examined: did a reliable transmitter other than Ayyūb relate it from Ibn Sīrīn? If that is found, it is known that the report has an original version to which it goes back. If that is not found, then does a reliable transmitter other than Ibn Sīrīn relate it from Abī Hurayra? If not, does a Companion other than Abū Hurayra relate it from the Prophet (peace be upon him)? If any of that is found, it is thereby known that the ḥadīth has an original version to which it goes back. If it is not found, the ḥadīth does not have one.

If we go to Ḥammād b. Salama, we notice that he transmitted a report from Ayyūb from [Muḥammad] b. Sīrīn from Abī Hurayra from the Prophet. We do not discover that report with any other student of Ayyūb. Hence we are compelled to halt from impugning him [Ḥammād] and compare [it] with what his contemporaries

<sup>846</sup> Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *al-Muqaddima*, 115.

<sup>847</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muḥammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 83.

<sup>848</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/155. See also Halit Ozkan, “The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madar”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2004), 65.

transmitted. It is essential that we first cogitate on this report: Did several of [Ḥammād's] students transmit it from him or only one, all by himself? It is found that several of his students transmitted it [from him], then it is known that Ḥammād indeed transmitted it. [But,] if it is found to be the transmission of a single weak [transmitter] from Ḥammād, then it is ascribed to that transmitter and not to him.

When it is established that [Ḥammād] did transmit from Ayyūb something which no one else did, then it is necessary to pause and weakness should not be ascribed to him [yet]. Rather, it should be ascertained: Has any reliable transmitter other than Ayyūb transmitted this report from Ibn Sīrīn? If that is found, then it is known that the report has a source from which it derives.

If what we described is not found, it is then ascertained: Did any reliable transmitter other than Ibn Sīrīn transmit this report from Abū Hurayra? If that is found, then it is known that the report has a source.

If what we said is not found, then it is ascertained: Does anyone relate this report from the Prophet other than Abū Hurayra? If that is found, it is established that the report has a source. When that is absent and the report itself at variance with the three sources [i.e. Ibn Sīrīn, Abū Hurayra, and the Prophet], then it is known that the report is undoubtedly a forgery and that the transmitter who was alone in transmitting it [at some point in the *isnād*] is the one who forged it.<sup>849</sup>

This is how Ibn Ḥibbān developed his methodology. His method starts in a conventional position and it is clear to see its structure and systematic manner. This example is also quoted by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in his methodological writing.<sup>850</sup> The objective of Ibn Ḥibbān analysis is aimed at solving the problem of forgery by examining the transmissions of Ḥammād.<sup>851</sup> He looked for indications in the *isnād* that could show whether the ḥadīth given by Ḥammād's students were single in transmission or not. If only one of his students transmitted the ḥadīth from him, Ibn Ḥibbān was satisfied to leave behind the ḥadīth and considered that student as a forger. But if not, Ibn Ḥibbān then turned to the distribution of ḥadīth among the names given by Ḥammād as his informants (who were Ayyūb, Ibn Sīrīn, and Abū Hurayra). This either would result in Ḥammād being exclusive in transmitting the ḥadīth that available to him or that he really received it along with others. Ultimately, Ibn Ḥibbān compared the transmission of Ḥammād with those of others, and he was able to see

<sup>849</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/155. This passage is also translated in Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 89.

<sup>850</sup> *Ma'rifa al-i'tibār wa al-mutāba'āt wa al-shawāhid* (Analysis, Parallelism and Attestations). See Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *al-Muqaddima*, 61; Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī also discusses in length some of Ibn Ḥibbān's evaluation in his *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī*. See Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī fī al-Radd 'alā al-Subkī*, ed. 'Aqīl b. Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Yamānī, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Rayyān, 2003).

<sup>851</sup> Harald Motzki, "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article", in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* ed. Herbert Berg, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 218.

that they matched closely. Then on this basis, he drew the conclusion that Ḥammād was a reliable transmitter.

In the opinion of Aḥmad Shākir, it appears that Ibn Ḥibbān's assessment of Ḥammād was the product of his appraisal and it is certainly distinct with al-Bukhārī's evaluation.<sup>852</sup> He adds that al-Bukhārī never included Ḥammād except in one *mutāba'a* (auxiliary) narration. Auxiliary narrations served to bolster the authenticity of the Prophetic tradition, but al-Bukhārī did not meet his usual tough criteria for authenticity when dealing with them.<sup>853</sup> Thus we found that Ḥammād is highly regarded by Ibn Ḥibbān where the *Ṣaḥīḥ* contains about 287 ḥadīth through him. Basically, as demonstrated by A'zami, Ibn Ḥibbān's method of evaluating the accuracy of a transmitter is parallel to other critics' style.<sup>854</sup> They compare the aḥādīth of different students of a transmitter, or the statements of a transmitter at different times, or oral recitation and written documents and many others. A century before, as recorded in the *Majrūḥīn*, Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn had applied the same method

Yaḥyā went to 'Affān to read the books of Ḥammād to him. ['Affān] said to him, "Have you not heard from anyone else?" [Yaḥyā] said, "Yes, seventeen people have transmitted to me from Ḥammād b. Salama." ['Affān] said, "By God, I will not transmit to you." [Yaḥyā] said, "This is a mistake. I will go to al-Basra and hear [them] from Tabūdhakī." ['Affān] said, "[That is] your business." [Yaḥyā] went to al-Basra and reached Mūsā b. Isma'il (Tabūdhakī). Mūsā said to him, "Have you not heard these books from anyone?" [Yaḥyā] said, "I heard them in their entirety from seventeen people and you are the eighteenth." [Mūsā] said, "Why do you do this?" [Yaḥyā] replied, "Ḥammād b. Salama used to make mistakes and I want to distinguish the errors he made from those which others made. If I see that his students unanimously transmit something [from him], I know that the error originates from Ḥammād himself. If they unanimously transmit something from him and one of them says [something] in disagreement with them, I know that the error originates from [that student] and not from Ḥammād. Thus, I distinguish between his own errors and the errors attributed to him [by his students]." <sup>855</sup>

Neither, it should be said, is Ibn Ḥibbān trying to directly replicate what the earliest critics did. On *rijāl* criticism he has cultivated an approach that was his own. He was influenced by his predecessors, of course but firmly with the demands of *rijāl* criticism of his era. Nevertheless, the terminologies chosen by Ibn Ḥibbān followed the early usage in the biographical dictionaries.<sup>856</sup> His terminology was already well-known and resemble the

<sup>852</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif), 115.

<sup>853</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Criticism of the Proto-Ḥadīth Canon: al-Dāraqutnī's Adjustment of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*", 18.

<sup>854</sup> M. M. A'zami, *Methodology and Literature*, 70-71.

<sup>855</sup> *Al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/34. This passage is also translated in M. M. A'zami, *Methodology and Literature*, 70-71 and Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 88.

<sup>856</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Ḥadīths in Early Sunnism", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* vol. 129, no. 2, (April-June 2009), 265.

formulations of Ibn Abi Ḥātim, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Maʿīn and others represented little disputed usage.<sup>857</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, like other critics, envisages the process of transmission so that ḥadīth play a fundamental role in every aspect of his world view, rooted in the terminology of the Quran. *Thiqa* (trustworthy) and *ḍaʿīf* (weak) denoted both successful and bad in a cosmic resulting of circumstance.<sup>858</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān does choose *ḍaʿīf* to be the general term for all the impugned transmitters included, as he mentions the twenty categories of them.<sup>859</sup> With these Ibn Ḥibbān included anyone who conformed to his judgement of the weak and of the forged, that is to say, proven to be weak or unreliable, proven not to be *ʿadl*, and thus not to satisfy the requirements demanded of transmitters of ḥadīth in the science of ḥadīth transmission.

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Ibn Ḥibbān treats in some detail twenty categories of impugned transmitters and spends twenty-five pages discussing essential definitions, examples, demonstrations and related topics. He asserts that these categories are appropriate for transmitters, explaining that these categories are necessary for all critical evaluation.<sup>861</sup> The discussion of transmitters' categories in the *Majrūḥīn* is probably one of the earliest comprehensive analysis that provides some insight into ḥadīth transmitters whose individual backgrounds are problematic. In the second and third century of *hijra*, an enormous amount of transmitter evaluation was devoted to questions regarding the names, dating, provenances, and sources of various ḥadīth transmissions. All of this formed different evaluation of even a transmitter and consequently the status of ḥadīth. An advantage of continuous *rijāl* criticism was that it enabled critics like Ibn Ḥibbān to learn much about the background and impact of certain ḥadīth without having to make a definitive decision about these persistent and perhaps unsolvable discussions. Additionally, it also provides for checks and balances on previous critics' evaluation.

Hence Ibn Ḥibbān reached a synthesis of the dissimilar evaluation when he established to consolidate the earlier terminologies employed in considering transmitters

<sup>857</sup> Bernard Weiss translates Ibn ʿAnbarī's treatise regarding the conditions of transmitter of *al-lughā* (language). Ibn ʿAnbarī's *Lumaʿ al-Adilla fī Uṣūl al-Naḥw* is a monument to the influence of the science of ḥadīth criticism and legal science on linguistic studies. See Bernard Weiss, "Language and Tradition in Medieval Islam," 93.

<sup>858</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Ḥadīths in Early Sunnism", 265.

<sup>859</sup> Librande, "The Supposed Homogeneity of Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Study", *The Muslim World* 71 (1982): 34-50.

<sup>860</sup> Librande, "Ḥadīth Scholars and Retentive Memory", 44.

<sup>861</sup> *Al-Majrūḥīn*, 1/58. See also John Wallbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason*, (Cambridge University Press: 2011), 115.

weakness into his twenty categories of impugned transmitters. This way each particular category will affect the accuracy of transmitters on a rigorously hierarchical basis and thus eventually a weak transmitter appears.<sup>862</sup> Perhaps like walking on eggshells, he repeatedly advised scholars to not exaggerate in impugning anyone.<sup>863</sup> He formulated his own descriptive which employed different terms for twenty categories of impugned transmitters:

1. They are the *zanādiqa* (heretics) who believe in infidelity and disbelief and do not believe in God and the Hereafter. They enter the cities and act like scholars but they forge the ḥadīth.
2. Among them are those who are aroused by the devil and attribute ḥadīth to trustworthy masters for the sake of motivating people to do good deeds.
3. Among them are those who deliberately forge ḥadīth and attribute them to trustworthy transmitters, thereby rendering the Prophet guilty of forgery.
4. Among them are those who from time to time forge ḥadīth to support the rulers or others but do not make a profession of it.
5. Among them are those who had previously written the ḥadīth but are overwhelmed with other duties and worshipping, hence they do not memorize or sift them. So that when they transmit ḥadīth, the *mursal* is elevated, the *mawquf* is supported (with *isnād*), and the *isnād* is altered.
6. Among them are those trustworthy transmitters who confused their ḥadīth at the end of their life as far as they do not think while transmitting and answer the question and transmit according to their will. Hence their authentic ḥadīth are mixed with their weak ḥadīth. All these are deserved to be leftover.
7. Among them are those who answer everything that has been asked, whether it is from his own report or others, and he does not bother to understand what is to be dictated.

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<sup>862</sup> Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 95.

<sup>863</sup> *Wa lā yaqūl 'alayh fawq mā yu'lam min. Al-Majrūhīn*, 1/58.

8. Among them are those who lies and he is even unaware that he is lying because the knowledge does not belong to his art.
9. Among them are those who transmit from teachers with authentic books that they have never met. The books are authentic but they had neither heard nor seen the teachers.
10. Among them are those who invert the reports and adjust the *isnād*.
11. Among them are those who met and heard from certain teachers, but after the teachers died, they memorize and dictate the ḥadīth that they had not heard from them.
12. Among them are those who travel and write down what they have obtained but lose their book. After enquiry, they transmit from others' books without memorizing or hearing it.
13. Among them are those who make many mistakes or make enormous errors to the point that they are not correct. Hence this deserves to be put aside although he is truthful and his transmission is good.
14. Among them are those who have been audited by a bad son or transcriber who forged his report.
15. Among them are those who is not aware that something has been inserted into ḥadīth.
16. Among them are those who have a quick tongue as far as they say something wrong in transmitting without being aware of their mistake.
17. Among them are those who are publicly regarded as stupid and sinful, even if they are in fact truthful.
18. Among them are those who are *mudallis*, obfuscating a person he has never met.
19. Among them are those who are *mubtadi* (sectarian) as well as proselytizers for the sake of the adherents of their sectarian belief.

20. Among them are story-tellers and asks those who forge ḥadīth for the sake of interesting their audience.<sup>864</sup>

## Conclusion

An abundance of such literatures has been written on this subject which has formed the basis of the science of ḥadīth transmission. As with all biographical dictionaries or ḥadīth collections in the early three centuries of *hijra*, its purpose is to enable one to figure out the work and character of great scholars and determine their value as critics. By examining Ibn Ḥibbān's *al-Majrūhīn* and *Ṣaḥīḥ* one gains an understanding into the different opinions relating to even a single transmitter among the various critics, and Ibn Ḥibbān himself writes from a committed standpoint. But one can also detect in this discussion changes in the conception which relate directly to the question of the status and style of critical evaluation.<sup>865</sup> The personal capabilities of Ibn Ḥibbān were a very important factor determining his critical method and surely they influenced his results, and one thus encounters an obvious lack of similarity in his viewpoints in comparison to other critics. Nonetheless, Ibn Ḥibbān took advantage of the fact that he lived in the late age of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* movement. The mean that Ibn Ḥibbān had at his disposal comparable versions of the ḥadīth along with earlier critics' evaluations of transmitters. Undoubtedly these works gave him a panoramic view of the timeline of the transmissions and enabled him to discover the transition of the ḥadīth through time, from one generation to the next.<sup>866</sup> Although Ibn Ḥibbān persisted approachable to pursue to submit higher strictness in the criticism process, he argued that if the trustworthy category was made too strict, few transmitters could be established. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Ibn Ḥibbān's discussions of Ḥammād b. Salama and Baqiyya b. al-Walīd. He argues that if one were to reject the transmission of all those who made mistakes or altered *isnāds*, there would be no ḥadīth left. Practically, this shows that Ibn Ḥibbān was actually very flexible with determining the status of a transmitter.

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<sup>864</sup> *Al-Majrūhīn*, 58-83.

<sup>865</sup> Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 39.

<sup>866</sup> Dickinson, *The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism*, 82.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### IBN ḤIBBĀN'S BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES ON RELIABLE TRANSMITTERS

The chapter is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of the Prophet and the early scholars in the Islamic tradition. The task involves analysing both theoretical and practical aspects of Ibn Ḥibbān's method for evaluating. Apart from biographical material of reliable transmitters in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it manifests clearly that Ibn Ḥibbān's approval of a transmitter is due to the inclusion both in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Mashāḥir al-'Ulamā' al-Amṣār*. Both sources yield information of reliable transmitters who lived during a period of 300 years using terminology that reflects his opinion on the reliability of the transmitter. They certainly give us an opportunity to investigate and compare his approach.

#### 5.1 The *Thiqāt* of Ibn Ḥibbān

In a recent volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, Ibn Ḥibbān is credited with *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, where he was described as “a widely travelled traditionist and prolific writer.”<sup>867</sup> Meanwhile, Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the *Thiqāt* and show it is scattered across various places, including Istanbul, Madinah, Damascus, Aligarh and Lucknow.<sup>868</sup> The available manuscripts of *al-Thiqāt* also mentioned by Ma'had al-Turāth al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī.<sup>869</sup> The first printed edition of the *Thiqāt* was edited by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Muīn Khan and assistants in 9 volumes and published by Dā'ira al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmaniyya of Hyderabad, India in 1973. In comparison, this study has used and cited the following edition: *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya of Beirut which is furnished with numbering schemes.<sup>870</sup> Yet both editions keep its original structure and organization. Later, a group of Indian scholars give a title of *Itmām al-In'ām bi-Tartīb mā Warada fī Kitāb al-Thiqāt li-Ibn Ḥibbān min al-Asmā' wa al-A'lām* for the new alphabetical indexes of the names and the paidonymics of the *Thiqāt* transmitters.<sup>871</sup> The

<sup>867</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, 1/334.

<sup>868</sup> *GAL*, 1/273; *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>869</sup> Muḥammad 'Izat 'Umar, *Fihris al-Makhṭūṭāt al-Muṣawwara fī Maktaba Ma'had al-Turāth al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī*, (1986-1406), 52.

<sup>870</sup> *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn and Turkī Farḥān al-Muṣṭafā, (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998).

<sup>871</sup> *Itmām al-In'ām bi-Tartīb mā Warada fī Kitāb al-Thiqāt li-Ibn Ḥibbān min al-Asmā' wa al-A'lām*, ed. A Group of Scholars, (Bombay: Dar al-Salafiyya, 1988).

work also was edited in a strictly alphabetical arrangement ignoring the original structure of its 16008 entries by Khalīl Ma'mūn Shīhā in 2007.<sup>872</sup>

Throughout the history of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, there is a great difference in scope, plan, and detailed contents, according to the main theme of the compilers. In the introduction of the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān writes that his work is an index of all the ḥadīth transmitters accompanied by biographical information about them. Concern for the authenticity of the biography and ḥadīth of the Prophet led to Ibn Ḥibbān sifting all available sources about and generations of transmitters which resulted in the collection of biographical material about transmitters which was used to assess their scholarship. In general, the *Thiqāt* is a biographical dictionary of ḥadīth transmitters that are grouped into four consecutively numbered generations i.e. *ṭabaqāt*, framed by an introduction at the beginning of the work and a postscript at the end. However, the transmitters are arranged in a loose alphabetical order.

Just like all the critics, Ibn Ḥibbān contented himself with gathering the evidence, and classifying it accordingly. There already existed many testimonies of ḥadīth transmitters biographies during Ibn Ḥibbān's time, which for some reason or other, he did not incorporate into his work. Occasionally, he points out that certain testimonies or materials had been mentioned and discussed in more detail in his other works.<sup>873</sup> Nevertheless, in respect of the sources of this ample biographical material, it is understandable that in the earlier stages Ibn Ḥibbān's *Thiqāt* was derived from preceding biographical dictionaries like Ibn Sa'd's (d. 223/837) *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ's (d. 240/854) *Tārīkh*, Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sālīḥ al-'Ijlī's (d. 261/874) *Thiqāt*, Ya'qūb b. Sufyān al-Fasawī's (d. 277/890) *al-Ma'rifa al-Tārīkh*, Abū al-'Arab al-Tamīmī's (d. 333/944) work, and the *Thiqāt* of Ibn Ḥibbān is reproduced as such, being unsupported with chains of transmission.<sup>874</sup> According to Sa'd al-Dīn, the *Thiqāt* relied heavily on al-Bukhārī's *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* and Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *al-*

<sup>872</sup> *Taqrīb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Khalīl Ma'mūn Shīhā, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 2007).

<sup>873</sup> In the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān listed at least fourteen titles of his work; 1) *Kitāb al-Ijtīmā' wa al-Ikhtilāf*. 2) *Kitāb al-Tābi'īn*. 3) *Kitāb al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*. 4) *Kitāb Tab' al-Atbā'*. 5) *Kitāb Tab' al-Tābi'īn*. 6) *Kitāb al-Khulafā'*. 7) *Kitāb Sharā'it al-Akhbār*. 8) *Kitāb al-Ṣaḥāba*. 9) *Kitāb al-Du'afā'*. 10) *Kitāb al-Faṣl bayn al-Naqla*. 11) *Kitāb Faḍā'il Sijistān*. 12) *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn*. 13) *Kitāb al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. 14) *Kitāb al-Hidāya*. See, *al-Thiqāt*, Index/229.

<sup>874</sup> Sa'd al-Dīn, *Ibn Ḥibbān wa Qīmat Kitābayh al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūhīn*, 178. See also Amīn b. 'Abd Allāh al-Shaqāwī, *Ta'arūḍ Aḥkām al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī 'alā Ba'd al-Ruwāt fī Kitābayh al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūhīn*, (M.A. Diss., King Saud University, 1419H).

*Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*.<sup>875</sup> He adds that Ibn Ḥibbān seems to have copied certain biographies from Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Jarḥ*. For example, in the *Thiqāt*

‘Abd al-Mālik b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Abd al-Azīz transmits from Abī Hurayra and Sa’īd b. Abī Ayyub transmits from ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd from him<sup>876</sup>

In the *Jarḥ*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim heard from his father

‘Abd al-Mālik b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Abd al-Azīz transmits from Abī Hurayra and Sa’īd b. Abī Ayyūb transmits from ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd from him<sup>877</sup>

In fact, as mentioned by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, the composition of *Jarḥ* was based on Bukhārī's *Tārīkh*.<sup>878</sup> It is undeniable that there is a marked similarity between them. However, entries in *Jarḥ* commonly name more transmitters and offer fuller versions of a transmitter's name, and the entries also include evaluations of the transmitter's personal reliability. Dickinson states the allegation that the scholars of al-Rayy i.e. Abu Zur‘a, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and his father plagiarized Bukhārī's *Tārīkh* is puzzling.<sup>879</sup> Taking up ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Mu‘allimī's opinion, Dickinson makes the important observation that

While Bukhārī supplies dates for many transmitters, often he neglects to provide any evaluation of their reliability. On the other hand, *Jarḥ* contains few dates, but assesses the reliability of almost every transmitter. Ibn Abī Ḥātim does appear to have taken (without acknowledgement) a number of the shortest entries directly from Bukhārī's book. The transmitters treated in these would appear to be those whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim – as he describes in his introduction – included for the sake of completeness, although he had not yet come across any critical judgement on them.<sup>880</sup>

Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥibbān clearly adheres to the material and organisation of the *Tārīkh* and *Jarḥ*. The principles undergirding the *Thiqāt*'s organization include person, topic, *sīra*, history, *ṭabaqāt*, and chronology. It should be noted that abridgement is Ibn Ḥibbān's prime technique for composing the *Thiqāt*. The ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet, who are said to have been the subject of an earlier work by Ibn Ḥibbān, entitled *Kitāb al-Tārīkh*.<sup>881</sup> The

<sup>875</sup> Sa’d el-Dīn, *Ibn Ḥibbān wa Qīmat Kitābayh al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūhīn*, 178.

<sup>876</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 5/117.

<sup>877</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Razī, *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, 5/344.

<sup>878</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Mūḍiḥ li-Awhām al-Jam‘ wa al-Tafrīq*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Mu‘allimī, (Cairo, Dār al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1985) 1/8. For a further comparison between *Tārīkh al-Kabīr* and *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, see Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 16.

<sup>879</sup> Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 31.

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>881</sup> *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn and Turkī Farḥān al-Muṣṭafā, (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 1/11.

length of entries varies widely. Some are very brief. Longer entries sometimes give some brief appreciation of the transmitter's subject. At the very outset, Ibn Ḥibbān determines exactly the transmitter's full name and place of origin or the place his ḥadīth circulated. Once in a while, he gives the reason why the transmitter is included in that particular *ṭabaqāt*.

The structure continues with the respective list as those from whom a transmitter related ḥadīth (*rawāʿ an*) and who related ḥadīth from him (*rawāʿ anḥ*). This is important for ḥadīth scholars in determining the possible connection with alleged teachers and students. The entry on each subsequent figure lists his teachers and students and thus establishes his place in a lineage whose authority derives ultimately from that of the founder.<sup>882</sup> For the same purpose, Ibn Ḥibbān provides information about the transmitters in cities that he travelled to and the masters whom he met. According to Mashhoor, in the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān "lumped together reliable transmitters which unconcern with different levels of reliability, making them all equal with regard to trustworthiness."<sup>883</sup> In this case, it seems more reasonable to relate Ibn Ḥibbān's methodology with the *Tārīkh* of Bukhārī. Unlike in the *Majrūḥīn*, Ibn Ḥibbān offers few evaluations of personal reliability. Hence we can say that the defining feature of the *Thiqāt* is that it is concerned with the names of men and the links in which they figure, not with evaluations of their personal reliability.<sup>884</sup>

Comparing the entries in the *Thiqāt* with his *Majrūḥīn*, it is particularly interesting to discover that on several occasions Ibn Ḥibbān mentions the same transmitter in both books. On one of the occasions, Ibn Ḥibbān states that his intention was to include the transmitter among the weak, like in the case of Muṣʿab b. Thābit (d. 157/773).<sup>885</sup> Or his name should be removed from among the weak, like Sufyān b. Husayn b. Ḥasan.<sup>886</sup> Saʿd el-Dīn lists about 90 identical transmitters in the *Thiqāt* and *Majrūḥīn*. Among those transmitters are ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/818) who was the famous descendant of the Prophet. Ibn Ḥibbān writes in ʿAlī al-Riḍā's entry: "His grave in Sanabad,<sup>887</sup> out of al-Nawqan was famously visited beside the grave of al-Rashid. I have visited it many times. When I faced a problem during

<sup>882</sup> See also Michael Cooperson, "Biographical Literature", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam. Vol. 4: Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 462.

<sup>883</sup> Mashhoor A. S. Ikteishat, "A Critical Study of the Science Jarḥ and Taʿdīl in Ḥadīth Literature," (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1996), 13.

<sup>884</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Bukhārī's *Tārīkh*, see Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism", 7-19.

<sup>885</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 7/478.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid*, 6/404.

<sup>887</sup> What was once the village of Sanabad became the city of Mashhad, which was built around the mausoleum of ʿAlī al-Riḍā. See Josef W. Meri, *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopaedia*, 438.

my stay in Tus, I have visited ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā’s grave, blessings of Allāh be upon his forefather and him, and asked Allāh for [the problem] to be solved, and my supplication has been answered and my problem has been solved. I have experienced this many times and I have found it likewise.” Overall, by our count, about 9 transmitters of those 90 were used in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* which makes up 13 ḥadīth.

We should also mention that Ibn Ḥibbān’s apparent attitude in evaluating reliable transmitters also drew the attention of later scholars. For instance, Ibn Ḥibbān includes Yūsuf b. Maymūn al-Qurashī in the *Thiqāt*, whereas, Ibn Ḥajar and al-Dhahabī consider him weak. Al-Dhahabi adds that “no lesson [can be learnt] by Ibn Ḥibbān mention of him (Yūsuf b. Maymūn) in the *Thiqāt*.”<sup>888</sup> According to al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency in expressing probity regarding certain transmitters indicates that he is almost similar to al-Ḥākim.<sup>889</sup> A ḥadīth whose transmitter has a reputation for truthfulness and trustworthiness, but not quite so accurate will degrade it from *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) to *ḥasan* (good).<sup>890</sup> Al-Ḥāzimī tried to justify Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency by saying: “what is said about Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency is not true because his aim is to consider *ḥasan* as *ṣaḥīḥ*.” Later ḥadīth scholars hold that Ibn Ḥibbān did not really distinguish between *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* ḥadīth.<sup>891</sup>

Above all, apart from the biography lists of ḥadīth transmitters which dominate the work, entries of non-transmitters are to be found. That is to say, the essential building blocks of the *Thiqāt*’s biography lists are also constructed with the lists of Islamic world rulers. For example, under the chapter on Caliphs and Kings (he considers that the first four are the only caliph),<sup>892</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān gives a list of rulers until his era, their full name, and important occasions occurred during their reign, and so on. As such, the *Thiqāt* has been one of the most valuable sources for the study of the first three centuries of ḥadīth transmitter biography and a record of medieval Islamic history, and even of non-ḥadīth transmission. Perhaps we can say that the subjects of the *Thiqāt* are the Prophet’s *sīra*, the history of caliphs and kings, biographies of Companions, ḥadīth transmitters, legal theorists, jurists, judges, theologians, and many others. However, the main theme is devoted to religious scholars, primarily ḥadīth transmitters who also acquired an understanding in *fiqh*, as asserted by Ibn

<sup>888</sup> *Taqrīb al-Thiqāt*, 91.

<sup>889</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, 1/108

<sup>890</sup> Ibn al-Salāḥ gives Khattābī’s definition of *ḥasan* thus: “the *ḥasan* is that whose origin is known and whose men are well-known. It is the pivot of most ḥadīth, is accepted by most of learned, and used by all the *faqīhs*”. For a closer analysis of *ḥasan* ḥadīth, see James Robson, “Varieties of the Ḥasan Tradition” in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6 (1961), 47-61.

<sup>891</sup> *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, 1/108.

<sup>892</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 2/304.

Ḥibbān. As it has been seen before, there is textual evidence that Ibn Ḥibbān's "minimum requirement of a transmitter" is that he is someone who not only memorizes and transmits ḥadīth but understands the meanings of the Sunnah i.e. *fiqh* of the ḥadīth. His contemporary, al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/971) also discusses al-Shāfi'ī's opinion and others regarding to the competence of transmission by one who had legal understanding.<sup>893</sup>

In scholarly writing to date, only limited attention has been paid to the structure of the *Thiqāt* and the historical and ideological information that the structure conveys.<sup>894</sup> It is perhaps best to return to the substantial arrangement of the composition itself, in order to acquire an understanding into the technique that has been exercised. Throughout the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān makes a number of revealing statements about his principles for the organization, classification and sequencing of the work. The below introduction is typical of this work, in that he offers a biographical summary in the form of a list of statements which encompass a limited range of information. And to make the case that his *ṭabaqāt* is understandable, Ibn Ḥibbān explains that

In this book, first we begin with the report of *al-Muṣṭafā* (the chosen one), his birth, [the beginning of] his prophethood, his migration, until he was taken by Allāh to His heaven.

Then, we mention the Prophet's Companions one by one in alphabetical order because they are the best generation after the Prophet.

After them, we mentioned the Successors who speak to the Prophet's companions from all regions in alphabetical order because they are the best people after the Companions.

Then we mentioned the third generation who met the Successors, as we mention them [the third generation] in the same style as the first two generations.

Then we mentioned the fourth generation who meet the Successors of Successors in the same fashion of their predecessor. This generation ends until our time.<sup>895</sup>

As this example from introduction of the *Thiqāt* shows ordinarily Ibn Ḥibbān prefers to cluster people from the same time period, to mention material thematically, and to sequence people and titles chronologically. Ibn Ḥibbān's remark about the principles of classification in the *Thiqāt* have not gone unnoticed, but neither have they attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, certainly not as much as the contents of the work have. Juynboll's analysis of the number of *ṭabaqāt* in the *Thiqāt* misses the fourth generation. He states that the *Thiqāt* commences with extensive biography of the Prophet and "it is further organised on the basis of three *ṭabaqāt*: that of the Successors and those of the following two

<sup>893</sup> See *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāṣil bayna al-Rāwī wa 'l-Wā'ī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1971), 530-31.

<sup>894</sup> *EI2*, 8/516.

<sup>895</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/10-11.

generations.”<sup>896</sup> The principle applied to the classification of biographies into the four *ṭabaqāt* is exceptionally helpful.

Like Bukhārī’s *Tārīkh*, many of the biographies in the *Thiqāt* supply the year of death. One would anticipate this from what is known of other biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, which share important characteristics with the *Thiqāt* and regularly include death dates in transmitter entries, usually without giving any other significant year with regard to the subject of the biographical information.<sup>897</sup> A quick glance at these dates demonstrates that Ibn Ḥibbān’s four *ṭabaqāt* deal with a period ranging back from the early fourth/tenth century to the first/seventh century. This is determined by the inclusion of his famous teacher Abū Ya‘lā Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. al-Muthannā (d. 307/919) in the final *ṭabaqāt*.<sup>898</sup> There can be no doubt that Ibn Ḥibbān adopted the *ṭabaqāt* system for a specific purpose. His motivation was to identify the scholars who had legitimate authority to determine religious doctrine and method. As observed by Claude Gilliot, “in the book classes (or “generations”) the interest in genealogy developed so as to establish a hierarchy of merits, also becoming concerned with the “authentic” transmission of the Islamic sciences, like the traditions of the Prophet (ḥadīth)”.<sup>899</sup>

In each *ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān arranges the names in alphabetical order then follows with a section on paidonymics as an integral part at the end. He also first mentions males and then the females. The first of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *ṭabaqāt* (Companions) is made up of 1595 biographies (1484 names, 111 paidonymics); the second *ṭabaqāt* (Successors) consists of 4867 biographies (4640 names, 227 paidonymics); the third *ṭabaqāt* (Successors of Successors) consists of 5552 biographies (5456 names, 96 paidonymics); and the final *ṭabaqāt* consists of 4488 biographies (4486 names, 2 paidonymics). Roughly, 68 percent of all women included in these four *ṭabaqāt* are *ṣaḥābiyyāt* (female Companions). Ibn Ḥibbān cites 222 women among the prominent transmitters of the first generation which is about 16.5 percent among the whole Companions.<sup>900</sup> As we shall see, the three following

<sup>896</sup> *EI2*, 8/516.

<sup>897</sup> See also Devin Stewart, “The Structure of the *Fihrist*: Ibn al-Nadīm as Historian of Islamic Legal and Theological School”, *International Journal of Middle East*, vol. 39, no. 3 (Aug., 2007), 370, for an observation about the arrangement of Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist* in chronological order as he apparently thinks first and foremost in terms of death dates.

<sup>898</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 8/55.

<sup>899</sup> Claude Gilliot, “Prosopography in Islam” in *Arab-Islamic Medieval Culture, Special Issue of Medieval Prosopography*, 23 (2002) (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2002), 21.

<sup>900</sup> Ruth Roded, *Women in Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa‘d to Who’s Who*, 63.

generations were included in the *Thiqāt*, but the *ṣaḥābiyyāt* undoubtedly represent a large contingent of all women whose biographies were recorded.<sup>901</sup>

In the *Thiqāt* as a whole, chronology is a structural organizing foundation, functioning at four recognizable degrees: the internal order of *sīra*; the internal order of the Chapter on Caliphs and Kings; the internal order of lists of *ṭabaqāt*; and the order of the book as a whole. Obviously an insight of these four chronological foundations helps readers to understand the *Thiqāt* and the ideas behind it. By classifying them like this one may collect necessary data from the *Thiqāt* and also gain insight into Ibn Ḥibbān's method of arrangement, beliefs, and historical analyses.<sup>902</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān does not, however, adhere to chronology at all times. In most cases when he breaks chronological arrangement, though, he does so for a discernible reason. Although the *ṭabaqāt* of the *Thiqāt* are presented in a chronological sequence, the individual biographies within them are plainly not. In general, Ibn Ḥibbān divides the *Thiqāt* into eight principal parts, which he designates *Kitāb* (book), each of which is then subdivided into *bāb* (chapter). Below is the list of eight *Kitāb* according to the pagination in the Dār al-Kutub edition

Table 3: Content of the *Thiqāt*'s Eight *Kitāb*

No.	List of Book
1.	Introduction
2.	<i>Sīra</i>
3.	History of Caliphs
4.	Companions
5.	Successors
6.	Successors of the Successors
7.	The generation who meet the Successors of the Successors
8.	Conclusion.

<sup>901</sup> A few such studies are as follows; Ruth Roded, *Women in Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd to Who's Who*, 20; Mohammad Akram Nadwi, *al-Muḥaddithāt: The Women Scholars in Islam*; Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>902</sup> Devin Stewart, "The Structure of the Fihrist," 370.



## 5.2 The *Sīra* Corpora in the *Thiqāt*

A number of recent studies have been interested at comparing the historiography of the *sīra* and *maghāzī* literatures between Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*,<sup>903</sup> al-Wāqidī's *Maghāzī* and Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* with ḥadīth collections like Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and others.<sup>904</sup> According to John Wansbrough, it has been recognized that data constituting them are generally identical.<sup>905</sup> However, what differentiates these materials from each other are approximately their narrative and chronological structures and the motives and methods governing these structures.<sup>906</sup> Basically, the *sīra* about the Prophet was constructed to furnish Muslims not only with the legal foundation for their way of life, but also with the actual importance of a unified Islamic model. Examining Ibn Ishāq's method, Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh claims that Ibn Ishāq took a world-wide and universal view of history, where all human beings are interdependent and the emergence of the Prophet as the last of all prophets marked the goal towards which the world's sacred history was moving.<sup>907</sup> Hence, in the light of this understanding, Ibn Ḥibbān and many others record the *sīra* under the section devoted to world history.<sup>908</sup> For instance, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān, the section named *Tārīkh* begins with the creation of the world, the stories of earlier prophets, and then proceeds to ḥadīth in which the central events in the Prophet Muḥammad's life are dealt with.<sup>909</sup>

<sup>903</sup> Patricia Crone compares between our two best-known sources for the life of the Prophet, Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī. She also ascribes "the steady growth of information" to them, says: "It is obvious that if one storyteller would know the date of this raid, while the third would know everything that an audience might wish to hear about it. This process graphically illustrated in the sheer contrast of size between works of Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) and Wāqidī (d. 823), that of Wāqidī being much larger for all that it covers only Muḥammad's period in Medina." See Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 223. However, Michael Lecker refutes the claim that any of this additional material is spurious. In his study of the death of Prophet's father, he concludes that everything stated by al-Wāqidī regarding the death was cited from some earlier source. See Michael Lecker, "The Death of the Prophet Muḥammad's father: did Wāqidī invent some of the evidence?", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 145 (1995): 9-27.

<sup>904</sup> J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, "Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithūn: Reconsidering the Treatment of 'Historical' Materials in Early Collections of ḥadīth", *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 28 (1996), 1-18. Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muḥammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>905</sup> John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Source and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 183.

<sup>906</sup> Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, "Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithūn," 1.

<sup>907</sup> Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh, "Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq (*The Biographer of the Holy Prophet*)", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*; Apr 1, (1967), 93. Uri Rubin also points out that this concept of history as progress is also known in Judaism and Christianity. See Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, (Princeton: The Darwin press, 1995), 7. See also E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 104.

<sup>908</sup> See *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 14/5-602, 5-268.

<sup>909</sup> Rosenthal also observes that "the Prophet is placed in a historical context. His history starts long before him with the beginning of the world. It leads through a series of great moments of spiritual promise, or

In writing the section on *Tārīkh*, it is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān followed the method of selecting his historical information after he had subjected his sources to ḥadīth criticism. One will notice that those of his sources whom he mentions by name were scholars of lofty reputation in their fields of study. However, his historical information is only limited to Muslim written sources, unlike Ibn Qutayba (d. 282/891). According to ‘Abd al-Aziz Duri, Ibn Qutayba was the first to take account of the Old Testament consulting information without prevarication from it about the beginning of Creation and the history of the prophets. He adds that Ibn Qutayba’s historical materials were esteemed for their neutrality and importance on matters of historical fact. Occasionally Ibn Qutayba offers the predominant view of events, but at others he gives his own original assessment.<sup>910</sup>

Earlier before, we also found that Ibn Ishāq utilized the knowledge of the Jews and Christians who had information about Muslim history, and thus he collected data from both parties. He cited them by naming this or that Jew or Christian, or as “some scriptuary” (*ahl al-Kitāb*). The most widely discussed criticism of Ibn Ishāq’s work was that of his contemporary Mālik b. Anas.<sup>911</sup> Mālik saying that he cited even the Jews as his authorities.<sup>912</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal also recorded a long narration of a Christian in Mu‘āwiyah’s era related to a Muslim who had met him in a convent, how Heraclius had sent him to see the Prophet and how he met him during the expedition of Tabuk.<sup>913</sup> Seemingly the effort of collecting from various sources is beneficial, as Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh once observed

To collect material from such varied and multifarious sources was not possible for a single generation, much less for a single person. Some information, even when recorded, could remain for generations confined to a certain locality and would not become available to the general student. The material was not merely religious or political, but also social, economic, and cultural; in fact, it related to all walks of life. Happily the early Muslim historians were not content with the information pertaining to the person of the Prophet only, but also gathered the material about his time and his contemporary society.<sup>914</sup>

Nevertheless, in this part our information of Ibn Ḥibbān’s thought about the *sīra* of the Prophet is derived from exegetical and juridical ḥadīth as well as his commentaries

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culminates in one supreme moment of salvation by which the life of all future generations is decisively circumscribed.” See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 23.

<sup>910</sup> A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 68.

<sup>911</sup> *EI2*, 3/810.

<sup>912</sup> Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh, “Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq (*The Biographer of the Holy Prophet*)”, 82.

<sup>913</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

<sup>914</sup> *Ibid*.

recorded in the *Thiqāt*.<sup>915</sup> The *sīra* is followed by chapter about the caliphs.<sup>916</sup> These all are focused on the Prophet and contain stories about his sayings and acts or his Companions' stories about him. Certainly to present a history of the life of the prophet poses problems for Ibn Ḥibbān just as compilation of authentic ḥadīth does for him. It is not easy to remain faithful both to objective history and the demands of authentic sources.<sup>917</sup> As Robin L. Fox stated, "if we read biblical narrative (or in this case the *sīra*) as a story, we abandon its historical truth. If we read it as literature, we will often find literary art in it, but this art takes further from truth."<sup>918</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān was clear about the fact that the *sīra* constituted no closed system of regulations and doctrinal positions, but that the ideal or norm had to be painstakingly extrapolated from often incomplete and contradictory sources.<sup>919</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he was composing an authentic biography of Prophet by sifting the materials which had been mixed. Ibn Ḥibbān's *sīra* is an extra work since his work in the science of ḥadīth transmission is accompanied by an abundance of forged materials, and there is a greater effort to identify the reliability of the even more ḥadīth closely. For Ibn Ḥibbān, that effort seems to have met with considerable success, if judged by the popularity of his works.<sup>920</sup> In a few words, his writing of the *sīra* attempts to carry the method of the ḥadīth scholars. Due to this, he was really accomplished in organizing four available sources for revealing the historical Prophet; the Quran, the ḥadīth, the *sīra*, and the poet. In the way that the first and the last such source feature less prominently, if not altogether infrequently, in his writing.<sup>921</sup> A further characteristic of the *sīra* in the *Thiqāt* is presentation within a chronological framework.<sup>922</sup> Like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥibbān applies the annalistic form to the

<sup>915</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān's writing on *sīra* also has been separately printed from the *Thiqāt*. See Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, ed. Al-Sayyid 'Azīz Bak, (Beirut: al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1417H).

<sup>916</sup> Andreas Gorke presents two different opinions of the relationship between the fields of *maghāzī* or *sīra* and ḥadīth. First, "*maghāzī* material is derived from exegetical and juridical ḥadīth... According to the other view, the development was the other way around". See Andreas Gorke, "The relationship between *maghāzī* and ḥadīth in early Islamic scholarship", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 74 (2011), 171-185.

<sup>917</sup> Review Author: Robert B. Campbell S.J. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2. (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 303-305.

<sup>918</sup> Robin Lane Fox, *The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible*, (Middlesex: Viking, 1991), 399.

<sup>919</sup> K. Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism" in *Abbasid Belles Letters* ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Sergjeant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 339.

<sup>920</sup> Review Author: Robert B. Campbell S.J. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2. (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 303-305.

<sup>921</sup> A similar methodology has been effectively adapted by Ibn Kathīr in his *Sīra*. See the review by Ahmad Fareed in Ibn Kathīr, *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad (al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya)*, 4. Vol., trans. Trevor Le Gassick, (Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2006), xvii.

<sup>922</sup> J. M. B. Jones, "The Maghāzī Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, 350.

*Sīra*.<sup>923</sup> Under a heading such as: “In the year *n*”, or “Then, there came the year *n*”, the various events of that particular year are enumerated.

Likewise, the practise of specifying the *isnād* was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān. However, in the conventional ḥadīth sense, Ibn Ḥibbān’s use of the *isnād* is irregular. It is a few times complete, but frequently omitted altogether; very often it does not go beyond his immediate source like typical *sīra* literatures. Among the most consistent names in the *isnād* is Ibn Ishāq and his probable influence on Ibn Ḥibbān is also clear to see. It appears that Ibn Ḥibbān took material from his predecessors and modified it for his own purpose.<sup>924</sup> The contents of the *sīra* in the *Thiqāt* are the same as in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The individual episodes seem, however, to flow much more smoothly into each other than in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*; in fact, as in any effective “thriller”, there never seems to be a pause or stop, and the end seems never to be in sight. The texts are longer and much more frequent.

As mentioned above, one of the important ingredient of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *sīra* is poetry.<sup>925</sup> In the opinion of Rosenthal, “the frequency of poetical insertions often marks as fiction. The verses which occur in the *sīra* are characterized by a simple language which, in contrast to Arabic poetry in general, needs no philological training and acumen for its understanding.”<sup>926</sup> In the *Thiqāt*, the poems deal with a variety of themes and styles: there is, for instance, the story when the Prophet stayed at the tent of Umm Ma‘bad during the migration to Madinah.<sup>927</sup> This poem is followed by Ḥassān b. Thābit’s poem which has been

<sup>923</sup> According to Rosenthal, the first Muslim author of annals whose work is preserved was the great Ṭabarī. Al-Ṭabarī’s *History* was first published in the first decade of the tenth century, and it was continued to the year 302/914-5. However, Rosenthal adds that it is unlikely that al-Ṭabarī might have been the first to apply the annalistic form to historical writing. See Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 64.

<sup>924</sup> For a study of the origin of the material in al-Wāqidi’s *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, see Rizwi S. Fazier, “The Issue of Authenticity regarding the Traditions of al-Wāqidi as Established in His *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*,” in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2 (Apr., 1999), 98.

<sup>925</sup> W. Arafat scrutinizes some opinions which directly or indirectly stigmatize the poetry of the *sīra* in whole or in part as spurious. See W. Arafat, “Early Critics of the Authenticity of the Poetry of the *Sīra*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10/1958, vol. 21 issue 3, 453-463; See also Muḥammad Amin Tawfiq, “Poetry in the *Sīra* of the Prophet,” *Islamic Quarterly* Jan 1, 1996, 258-263.

<sup>926</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 167.

<sup>927</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/127. Ibn Ḥibbān provides the poem as follows:

Allāh, Lord of all men, awarded His very best reward to  
Two Companions who stayed at the tents of Umm Ma‘bad  
They stayed there in good will, and then left; and  
Lucky is he who becomes the Companion of Muḥammad  
O Quṣayy, Allāh did not withhold from your actions that  
Will not be rewarded, nor leadership?  
Ask your sister about her goat and bowl; if you were  
To ask the goat, she would testify.  
He asked her for a goat without young, and it gave milk  
For him in plenty, its teat giving foam

posited in similar fashion to the writing of Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*.<sup>928</sup> Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/673) is well known for his evocative panegyrics in defence of Islam, its Prophet, and his Companions.<sup>929</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān records one of Ḥassān’s poem

“A people disappointed, having lost their prophet,  
while those to whom he hurried were pleased,  
He left a people and their spirits left them, and he  
took up residence with a people with a light renewed.  
Are those who mislead people out of blind stupidity  
equal to those rightly guided by a guide?  
A prophet, seeing about him what other do not see,  
Reciting the Book of Allāh at every scene.  
If one day he should speak the words of the unseen, it  
is corroborated the same day or, at most, the morning of the next.  
Abu Bakr must be pleased by the pleasure his grandfather  
enjoys at his accompanying him; whoever pleases Allāh will be happy  
Let the place of their woman please the Banū Ka‘b, and  
her sitting watching for the Muslims.”<sup>930</sup>

This poem is recorded under the chapter of *hijra* which draw the line between two eras of Makkah and Madinah. Just the same, Ibn Ḥibbān’s general narrative framework is identical with others; the story of the prophet is split into those two important stages. The Makkan period stretches from the Prophet’s birth to his migration to Madinah. This phase represents the pre-Islamic era, the Prophet early years in Makkah, his first revelation, the beginning of his public preaching, the migration of his Companions to Abyssinia, the meeting at al-‘Aqaba, and his migration to Madinah. From this point, as can be seen in the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān imposes annalistic or a chronological timeline according to the year of *hijra* until the year of forty *hijra*. The Madinan era is made up of events describing his arrival there, the building of first mosque, the establishment of brotherhood between the *Muhājirūn* (emigrants) and the *Anṣār* (helpers), and primarily his *maghāzī* (military expeditions) against

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So he pledged (with the goat) (milk) for the milker,  
Such that it remained abundant at its commencement and it at its completion.

This passage is also translated by Trevor Le Gassick in Ibn Kathīr, *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad (al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya)*, 2/173.

<sup>928</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*, ed. Edward Sachau, (Leiden: Brill, 1904), 1/156-157.

<sup>929</sup> Walid ‘Arafat has called him the “poet laureate” of the prophet. He adds that Ḥassān is more correctly the most prominent of several poets who were associated with the rise of Islam and one who already had established reputation in the Jahiliyya. See *EI2*, 3/271; He also publishes several articles on Ḥassān b. Thābit. “Ḥassān b. Thābit, Dīwān, no. 1: The Historical Background to a Composite Poem”, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, v. 15 no. 1 (1970), 88-97; “A Controversial Incident and the Related Poem in the Life of Ḥassān b. Thābit”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 17, 12 (1955), 197-205.

<sup>930</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/127-128.

others and the unbelievers of Makkah, which culminated in the fall of that city, and in the eventual spread of Islam throughout Arabia.<sup>931</sup>

At the beginning of each chapter or annalistic heading, Ibn Ḥibbān introduces a ḥadīth that is complete with an *isnād*. As an illustration, coming immediately after the introduction of the *Thiqāt*, Ibn Ḥibbān posits the ḥadīth about the year of the Prophet's birth. A commentary that appears after the ḥadīth or narrative is typically introduced by the formula *qāla Abū Ḥatīm* (Abū Ḥatīm [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). The first ḥadīth is preceded by short *tarjama*: *dhikr mawlid Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayh wa sallam* (an account of the birth of the Apostle of Allāh, may peace be upon him).<sup>932</sup> The sole interest of the ḥadīth seems to be to ascertain the exact date and to determine the years either side of it.<sup>933</sup> Then Ibn Ḥibbān proceeded to present stories having something to do with “the affair of the elephant”, which marked the year in which Abraha's troops and elephants have been defeated at the outskirts of Makkah. Stories detailing occasions of the event are arrayed in sequence, and the chapter ends with Abraha's death and the succession of his son Yaksum.<sup>934</sup>

The early part also comprises ḥadīth about some of the genealogy of the Prophet and plotted out the significant ancestors of the Prophet's patrilineal lineage. The subject of the Prophet's genealogy received much attention from Ibn Ḥibbān because of the contentious issues involved. Perhaps through comparative textual analysis, Ibn Ḥibbān presented the differences between several sources. It is worth mentioning that in the context of his methodology uncertain reports have been used in the narration of the Prophet's genealogy and he presents them as “the available sources” which include all the stories he received. In this case, as asserted by Daniel Martin Varisco, “genealogy should be approached as a mode of discourse and at some point it must be read as more than a genealogy; historiography must be give way to hermeneutic.”<sup>935</sup>

<sup>931</sup> *The Life of Muḥammad*, ed. Uri Rubin, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998), xiv.

<sup>932</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/14.

<sup>933</sup> Michael Cook has analysed the divergent reports on 'Abdullāh's death and compared al-Wāqidī to his predecessors. It has been a well-known fact that Prophet's father died before his birth. See Michael Cook, *Muḥammad*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 65. While Michael Lecker scrutinizes al-Wāqidī and others have to say about the death of the Prophet's father “in order to arrive at some general observations on the emergence of Islamic historiography”. See Michael Lecker, “The Death of the Prophet Muḥammad's father: did Wāqidī invent some of the evidence?”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 145 (1995): 9-27.

<sup>934</sup> Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, “*Maghāzī* and the *Muḥaddithūn*”, 3.

<sup>935</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco, “Metaphors and Sacred History: The Genealogy of Muḥammad and the Arab Tribe”, *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 3 (Jul. 1995), 145.

Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the genealogy that traces the Prophet's lineage through the ancient prophets all the way back to Ādam.<sup>936</sup> He emphasises that the certainty of the Prophet's genealogy is traced only until 'Adnān. From 'Adnān to Ādam he indicates otherwise. Taking into consideration these conflicts, Ibn Ḥibbān brings five discrepancies in the Prophet's patrilineal lineage from 'Adnān to Ibrāhīm, three discrepancies from Ibrāhīm to Nūḥ, and three discrepancies from Nūḥ to Ādam. In Ibn Ḥibbān's selection of ḥadīth, when the Prophet presented his lineage, he gave the significant ancestors i.e. Ismā'īl, Kināna, Quraysh, and Hāshim. The Prophet says, "Verily Allāh has chosen Kināna amongst the descendants of Ismā'īl, and He has chosen Quraysh amongst Kināna, and He has chosen Banī Hāshim amongst Kināna, and He has chosen me amongst the Banī Hāshim. And I am the master of the children of Ādam on the Day of Judgement, and it is no boast."<sup>937</sup>

Arab society in which the Prophet lived along with Greek, Roman, Jewish groups, Byzantines and Sassanians is generally described as male-dominated marriage and patrilineal kinship with some traces of an earlier matriarchy.<sup>938</sup> William Robertson Smith in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, first published in 1885, attempts to establish "the theory of the primitive matriarchy in the Arabian context."<sup>939</sup> Smith concluded that the patriarchal family grew out slowly out of a system commonly called the *matriarchate*, in which women were the acknowledged permanent element in the household. At the time of the Prophet, matrilineal kinship was gradually replaced by patrilineal kinship.<sup>940</sup> Analysing materials from the biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters like the *Thiqāt* or other literatures also shows that male kinship was of dominant importance, but female kinship was not neglected. The first component of description in the Prophet's biography is patrilineal descent, and as the above-mentioned goes far back to Ādam. Ibn Ḥibbān also reports the Prophet's mother's genealogy with her both patrilineal and matrilineal lineages.<sup>941</sup>

Furthermore, Ibn Ḥibbān posits biographies of the family of the Prophet in a separate section at the end of the *sīra*. Apart from Prophet's uncles and aunts, his section on the

<sup>936</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/21. See also Michael Cooperson, "Biographical Literature," 461.

<sup>937</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/21.

<sup>938</sup> See Kecia 'Alī, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010), 11.

<sup>939</sup> See William Robertson Smith, *Kinship & Marriage in Early Arabia*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907). Andrew Lang, "Book Review on Kinship & Marriage in Early Arabia", *Nature*, 04/1886, vol. 3, issue 858; According to Ruth Roded, this theory was developed by Johann J. Bachofen in 1861, John F. McLennan in 1865, and Lewis Henry Morgan in 1877. See Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd Who's Who*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 21.

<sup>940</sup> Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*, 21.

<sup>941</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/47.

Prophet's family is devoted to the Prophet's wives where the biographies deal with the name, tribe, their earlier marriage, death, and they are organized according to year of marriage. In the text relating to the Prophet and Khadīja's marriage, Ibn Ḥibbān cites the story that the Prophet went off with his uncle Hamza to visit Khuwaylid b. Asad and Khadīja was given away by her father.<sup>942</sup> The story that Khadīja consulted Waraqa appeared after the marriage to prepare a base for the first revelation or the beginning of the prophethood episode. Waraqa says to Khadīja: "If this is true Khadīja, then Muḥammad is the Prophet of our people. Long have I known that a prophet is to be expected, and his time hath now come."<sup>943</sup>

The process of elaborating upon the story of the prophethood widened the scope of Ibn Ḥibbān's conception of revelation. According to the ḥadīth supplied the genesis of Muḥammad's prophecy was decreed by Allāh between the creation of Adam and the spirit breathed into him.<sup>944</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān presents the story of the first revelation under the heading of "The Beginning of Revelation." He states that the story itself in two versions of ḥadīth. First, 'Ā'isha's ḥadīth which contains early ideas about revelation, such as "a true dream in sleep," address of the angel, the inexperienced prophet's fear, etc.<sup>945</sup> Secondly, Jābir's ḥadīth

<sup>942</sup> But in the meantime, al-Bayhaqī related from the transmission of al-Zuhrī through 'Ammār b. Yāsir says that it was Khadīja's brother, 'Amr b. Khuwaylid. See Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī al-Mālikī, *Sharḥ al-Zarqānī alā al-Mawāhib al-Laduniyya bi al-Minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1996), 1/378. Another report from Ibn 'Abbās through 'Ikrima says that her father was dead and that she was given away by her uncle, 'Amr b. Asad. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyār, 'Abd al-Hafīz Shiblī, (Egypt: Matba'a Muṣṭafā al-Bābā, 1950), 1/190. Martin Lings, *Muḥammad His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, 35. W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship & Marriage in Early Arabia*, (London: Adam and Charles Black), 289.

<sup>943</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/47.

<sup>944</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>945</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān cites 'Ā'isha's report: "The first prophetic experience of the messenger of God was "a true dream in sleep" (*al-ru'ya al-ṣādiqa* [var. *al-ṣāliha*] *fī al-nawm* cf. Quran 37:105, 4827). Each time the dreamt, it would seem to him like the "light of dawn" (*falaq al-ṣubḥ*; cf. Quran 6:96). Then he began to find pleasure in solitude. He used to retire to a cave in the mountain Ḥirā', where he practised *taḥannuth* (see M. J. Kister, "Al-Taḥannuth: An Inquiry into the Meaning of term") ... when he was thus engaged in the cave of Ḥirā', the angel came to him, saying: Recite. The Prophet said: "I am not a reciter". The [Prophet] said: "The angel seized me and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: Recite!" I said: I am not reciting. The angel seized me again and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: "Recite!" I said: "I am not reciting". The angel seized me for the third time and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created ..." the Prophet repeated it, his heart palpitating with terror. Then he returned home to Khadīja, saying: "Cover me [with cloths]", so they covered him till he overcame his anxiety. He told Khadīja what had taken place, and said: "I fear for myself," Khadīja said: "God will never disgrace thee ..." then Khadīja took him to her cousin Waraqa, who had become a Christian in the jāhiliyya, wrote Hebrew, and used to copy passages from the Gospels (*Injīl*) in Hebrew ... the prophet told him about the things he had seen, and Waraqa said to him: "This is the *nāmūs* which God sent down unto Moses. The Messenger of Allāh asked: Will they drive me out? Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said: Anyone who came with something similar to what you have been brought was treated with hostility; and if I am still alive when you are sent as a prophet, I shall support you and help you. But after a few days Waraqa died. The revelation is stopped coming to the Messenger of Allāh for a while, till he became distressed and grieved..." See *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/48-51.



(the *Muddaththir* passage) is a chronological continuation of the cave of Ḥirā' ḥadīth.<sup>946</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān comments with a number of phrases linking the occurrence of the second revelation directly to the first: "It was Gabriel that had appeared to him in Ḥirā' with "Recite in the Name of thy Lord Who created." When he (the Prophet) returned to Khadīja's house and was wrapped up, Allāh revealed in Khadīja's house "O thou who art covered, arise and warn! Thy Lord magnify." Altogether, this constitutes a sense of unity between the two ḥadīth. Next, Ibn Ḥibbān continued to describe the early people's acceptance of Islam like Khadīja, 'Alī, Abū Bakr and others.<sup>947</sup>

Across-the-board, the episode about the Prophet's revelation seems to have a deep meaning other than simply recounting the account which the three aḥadīth have the appearance to be acting as one unit. The chapter does more than simply provide a chronological timeline of the first revelation, Ibn Ḥibbān describes the origin of prophethood, the first revelation, the experience of revelation, and the lapse of revelation. He also does not easily introduce ḥadīth to declare his belief, but also uses a number of other tools (i.e. title chapter, commentaries) to help one understand his idea on the discussion of revelation. For example, the use of the ḥadīth at the beginning of the episode frames prophethood in a wider context: from the very beginning Ibn Ḥibbān wants his reader to think beyond the details of the first revelation, but of "divine predetermination" more generally.<sup>948</sup>

Previously mentioned, a no less important event in Prophet's career was his *hijra* from Makkah to Madinah, and one ḥadīth was applied to its time and circumstance. It will be remembered that, according to Ibn Ishāq's work, the *hijra* episode took place in the night when 'Alī replaced the Prophet in his bed.<sup>949</sup> Ibn Ishāq's account about the *hijra* is based on a tradition going back to Yazīd b. Ziyād ← Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazī.<sup>950</sup> As it was recorded by Ibn Hishām, this tradition is interspersed with many shorter traditions going back to other transmitters. Numerous long and short versions of his account can be found in

<sup>946</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān cites Jābir's report: "... I stayed in Ḥirā' for one month and when my stay was completed, I come down and went into the heart of the valley. Somebody called me aloud. I looked in front of me, behind me, on the right of my side and on my left, but I did not see anybody. I was called again and I looked about but saw nothing. I was called again and I raised my head and there was [the angel] above me seated on the throne in the sky. I was frightened by him, and I came to Khadīja (returned home), saying: Wrap me up! They wrapped me up and threw water on me. So Allāh revealed the verse, "O you who are all wrapped up!" until His word "purify!" See *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/51.

<sup>947</sup> Stephen Burge, "Reading between the Lines: The Compilation of Ḥadīth and the Authorial Voice," 184.

<sup>948</sup> For a succinct overview of the "divine predetermination", see Fazlur Raḥmān, *Major Themes of the Quran*, 23.

<sup>949</sup> Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1/484

<sup>950</sup> See *The Life of Muḥammad: A Translation of (Ibn) Ishāq's "Sīrat Rasūl Allāh,"* trans. A. Guillaume, (Pakistan Branch: Oxford University Press, 1970), 222.

the source.<sup>951</sup> Yet in Ibn Ḥibbān's account there is no mention of 'Alī's episode that corresponds to the following ḥadīth through the *isnād*; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Qutayba al-Lakhmī ← Ibn Abī Sirrī ← 'Abd al-Razzāq ← Ma'mar ← al-Zuhrī ← 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr ← 'Ā'isha.<sup>952</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān selected the story from Ibn Ishāq in his *sīra* the ḥadīth of which includes the involvement of Abū Bakr's family members, prepared for the big event. This ḥadīth as well seems to be based on the convention that the *hijra* started from Abū Bakr's house at shortly before midday.<sup>953</sup> Next, Ibn Ḥibbān narrates the actual movement of the Prophet and Abū Bakr from Makkah to Madinah without any *isnād*. The topic of *hijra* discussed by Ibn Ḥibbān forms the final Makkan chapter in the life of Prophet.<sup>954</sup> It is a well-known story that 'Umar is reported to have convened a council of eminent companions for the purpose of deciding upon a uniform system of dating to be applied throughout the Islamic realm. And it was agreed to calculate dates from the beginning of the Prophet's *hijra* to Madinah.<sup>955</sup> As mentioned previously, the subsequent chapters are subordinated under the first or second or third year of the *hijra* and so on.<sup>956</sup> Once in a while, Ibn Ḥibbān connects the events of one

<sup>951</sup> Andreas Gorke, "Historical Tradition," 244.

<sup>952</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān cites 'Ā'isha's report: "One day, while we were sitting in our house at noon, someone said to my father (Abū Bakr), "This is Allāh's Messenger with his head covered coming at a time at which he never used to visit us before." Abū Bakr said, "May my parents be sacrificed for him. By Allāh, he has not come at this hour except for a great necessity." So Allāh's Messenger came and asked permission to enter, and he was allowed to enter. When he entered, he said to Abī Bakr. "Tell everyone who is present with you to go away." Abū Bakr replied, "There are none but your family. May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allāh's Messenger!" The Prophet said, "I have been given permission to migrate." Abū Bakr said, "Shall I accompany you? May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allāh's Messenger!" Allāh's Messenger said, "Yes." Abū Bakr said, "O Allāh's Messenger! May my father be sacrificed for you, take one of these two she-camels of mine." Allāh's Messenger replied, "(I will accept it) with payment." So we prepared the baggage quickly and put some journey food in a leather bag for them. Asmā', Abū Bakr's daughter, cut a piece from her waist belt and tied the mouth of the leather bag with it, and for that reason she was named *dhāt al-niṭaqayn* (i.e. the owner of two belts). Then Allāh's Messenger and Abū Bakr reached a cave on the mountain of Thawr and stayed there for three nights. See *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/117.

<sup>953</sup> *Fī baytina fī naḥr al-zāhira* (in our house at noon). See *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/117.

<sup>954</sup> Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 223.

<sup>955</sup> Daoud S. Casewit, "Hijra as History and Metaphor: A Survey of Quranic and hadith Sources," *The Muslim World* 88 (April 1998), 106.

<sup>956</sup> *The second year of hijra; the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Banī Qaynuqa', the Battle of al-Suwayq*  
*The third year of hijra; Sirya al-Farda, the battle of Uhud*  
*The fourth year of hijra; the battle of al-Rajī' in Ṣafar, the battle of Banī al-Naḍīr, Badr al-Muwa'ad,*  
*delegation of al-Khazraj to Salām b. Abī al-Haqīq*  
*The fifth year of hijra; the battle of (Dhāt al-Riqā in Muḥarram, Dawma al-Jandal, al-Muraysī', al-Khandaq,*  
*Banī Qurayza), delegation of 'Abd Allāh b. Unays*  
*The sixth year of hijra; the battle of Ḥudaybiya, the battle of Dhī Qird*  
*The seventh year of hijra; the battle of Khaybar, Muslims who died in Khaybar*  
*The eighth year of hijra; towards Hawzān,*  
*The ninth year of hijra; the battle of Rome*  
*The tenth year of hijra; the death of the Prophet, the Prophet's characters.*

and the same year by the simple device of inserting the phrase like, “*fī shahr al-rabī‘ al-awwāl* (in the month of *rabī‘ al-awwāl*).”

Under each year, Ibn Ḥibbān inserts the section on the Prophet’s *ghazawāt* (military campaigns) and *sarāyā* (those in which he did not engage) against the infidels Quraysh and their allies which deal with some quick raids but mostly were full-scale battles. The most significant events were the battle of Badr, when the Muslims defeated the numerically superior forces of the Makkans; the battle of Uḥud, the conquest of Makka when the Muslims marched triumphantly into the city.<sup>957</sup> In the closing chapters of the *sīra*, Ibn Ḥibbān deals with the Prophet’s death and his physical appearance. He concludes the chapter with a detailed description of the appearances of the Prophet (fair-skinned, thick bearded, and of medium height), the Prophet’s manner of speech (pleasant and deliberate in company, but loud and ringing when he delivered a sermon) and the rest.<sup>958</sup> Roughly, Ibn Ḥibbān’s biography of the Prophet is the single largest section in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*, amounting to one-eighth of the text. Following some of his predecessors, Ibn Ḥibbān continued his history of early Islam past 11/632 down to his own time, focusing on Islamic world rulers (caliphs and kings, according to his terminology). Their entries are much less extensive than the *sīra*, also Ibn Ḥibbān limits the use of annalistic heading only until 40/660.<sup>959</sup>

His vision of the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar is typically Sunni as he asserted that the Prophet did not appoint ‘Alī as his successor. Much more significantly for Ibn Ḥibbān, no other ḥadīth gives more assurance for the unambiguous righteousness of Abū Bakr and the supremacy of his suitability for the caliphate than the pillars of Islam i.e. the *salāh* (prayer) ḥadīth.<sup>960</sup> According to this ḥadīth, the Prophet during his illness appointed Abū Bakr to take his place as the prayer leader of the Muslim community. This ḥadīth occurs in the final chapter of the *sīra*, just before the beginning of Chapter of Caliphs and Kings and is also found in most of the standard Sunni ḥadīth collections and chronicles.<sup>961</sup> To delineate the era of the caliphate and the beginning of monarchy Ibn Ḥibbān presents the ḥadīth “the caliphate after me will last thirty years, then will come the kings.”<sup>962</sup> Such

<sup>957</sup> For a comparative study of this organization, see also Michael Cooperson, “*Ibn Sa‘d*”, 197.

<sup>958</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 2/145-151.

<sup>959</sup> *Ibid*, 2/301.

<sup>960</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 2/156. See also Wadād al-Qāḍī, “Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī: A Sunni Voice in the Shi‘i Century,” in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilfred Madelung*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Josef W. Meri (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2003), 130.

<sup>961</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 2/131.

<sup>962</sup> “*al-khilāfa ba‘dī thalāthūn sana, thumma yakūn malikā*.” *Ibid*, 2/304.

exposition is presented under the *tarjama*, “*dhikr al-bayān bi-annā man dhakarnāhum kānū khulafāʾ, wa man baʿdahum kānū mulūkā* (an account of the discussion of who we have mentioned were the caliphs and who after them were the kings).”<sup>963</sup> This chapter ends with the entry of Abbasid al-Muṭīʿ b. al-Muqtadir (d. 363/974)<sup>964</sup> and is followed by biographies of more than sixteen thousand ḥadīth transmitters.

### 5.3 The *Mashāhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār*

Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Mashāhīr* is a compendium of biographies of men of learning from various regions of early Islam which contained many entries the subjects of which included came literary individuals who took an active role in encouraging the spread of knowledge. People of knowledge may be ḥadīth transmitters, judges, politicians or entrepreneurs, but these activities fall outside the scope of the *tarjama*, which focuses upon essential features that link individuals with the quality of being pious and literary centres of society. Although other activities are significant for discerning the role of the individual, yet they are not part of the reported scholarly persona.<sup>965</sup>

Brockelmann and Sezgin mention that the manuscript of the *Mashāhīr* is preserved in Leipzig.<sup>966</sup> In addition, Sezgin also indicates the standard printed edition of the *Mashāhīr* was first printed by Maṭbaʿa Lajna al-Taʿlīf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr in one volume, in Egypt in 1960.<sup>967</sup> This was Manfred Fleischhammer’s edition, based on a manuscript in the University Library of Leipzig. In his introduction, Fleischhammer describes in short the available manuscript including the name, total of figures, organization, scribes or copyists, transmission of the book, and the date of composition.<sup>968</sup> A quick glance at the content reveals that there is no alphabetical order in this book. However, Fleischhammer supplies alphabetical indexes of the names and the *kunya* of the men at the end of this book. These two indexes are indispensable because most of the men are mentioned by their names and a few are mentioned with the *kunya* first, usually followed by the name. Discussing first page of the manuscript, he indicates that the book was written as “*Kitāb Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-*

<sup>963</sup> *Al-Thiqāt*, 2/304.

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid*, 2/336.

<sup>965</sup> *EI2*, 10/224.

<sup>966</sup> *GAL*, 1/273. *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>967</sup> *GAS*, 1/191.

<sup>968</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār*, ed. Manfred Fleischhammer, (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Lajna al-Taʿlīf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1960).

*Amṣār raḥimahum Allāh, min taṣnīf al-Imām Abī Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān ibn Aḥmad al-Bustī raḍī Allāh ‘anh’.*

In his review, Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid highlighted a few mistakes which have been made in the first printed edition.<sup>969</sup> He looks to the letterforms, short vowel markings, pointing in single or double dots and etc. which may be due to errors made when copying the text. He also doubted that the manuscript is complete and therefore he seems want to suggest that it was an abridgement. Since then several other re-workings of the Egyptian edition have appeared. These works, which provide a valuable addition to the many biographical dictionaries available, have been very carefully edited. Marzūq ‘Alī Ibrāhīm re-edited the *Mashāhīr* and published it in 1987.<sup>970</sup> The editor used manuscripts, Fleischhammer’s edition, and Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Thiqāt* for the reconstruction of the book. He asserts the actual name of this book is *Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār wa A’lām Fuqahā’ al-Aqtār* based on Ibn Ḥibbān’s introduction. In total, the *Mashāhīr* consists of biographies of which there are 1602 separate items; but as 14 of the men are duplicated, there are only 1588 separate people.

The biographies are all concise, occasionally as short as a single printed line, sometimes giving no more than the man’s name and the date of his death, but more often giving further details.<sup>971</sup> However, Ibn Ḥibbān does not mention his sources on all of these biographies perhaps because he came from the generation after Ibn Sa’d, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and other scholars of the third/ninth century. In his introduction to the *Mashāhīr*, Ibn Ḥibbān explains why he wrote it.<sup>972</sup> He indicates that he wished to provide a collection of distinguished men as well as to present a convenient book for students. This seems to him to have been more important than giving lengthy details of their lives and works. Even though the *Mashāhīr* gives comparatively little information about the men, it is important because it gives a list about men who were considered distinguished by master critics, like Ibn Ḥibbān in the fourth/tenth century. Paying attention to these strategies of compilation makes it possible to suggest some general tendencies in Ibn Ḥibbān’s representation of cities

<sup>969</sup> Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, “Kitāb Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār li-Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī ‘anā bi-taṣṭih: M. Fleischhammer,” in *Majalla Ma’had al-Makḥūṭat al-‘Arabiyya* no. 6, May – Nov 1960, 296-298.

<sup>970</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār wa A’lām Fuqahā’ al-Aqtār*, ed. Marzūq ‘Alī Ibrāhīm, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1987).

Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār wa A’lām Fuqahā’ al-Aqtār*, ed. Majdī b. Mansur, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1995).

<sup>971</sup> James Robson, “Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī: Die berühmten Traditionarier der islamischen Länder, hrsg. V. M. Fleischhammer (Book Review),” *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 05/1963, 270.

<sup>972</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 1.

or regions and to interpret these tendencies in light of the historical context.<sup>973</sup> Beyond question it was a source book for later biographical works.

For the most part, the book is devoted to those notable persons of subsequent generations who transmitted ḥadīth reports about the Prophet from the Companions down to the Successors of Successors. It is clear to see Ibn Ḥibbān's general criteria for the divisions of the scholars or other men into classes. He lived in a period when this approach had made considerable advances. Ibn Ḥibbān also precisely states that the *Mashāhīr* is arranged according to *ṭabaqāt* which lists the scholars in three early generations of Islam.<sup>974</sup> The exceptional feature of this biographical dictionary is that the entries are arranged first according to city, and then in each city according to generational classes (*ṭabaqāt*). Several organizational principles can be proposed about how Ibn Ḥibbān composed the *Mashāhīr*; (1) he included the noble persona (excellence in a field of knowledge), (2) occasionally, he posited them in order; relation to the Prophet for the first generation of Muslim i.e. Companions, family of the Prophet and etc., (3) he abandoned the alphabetical order for the generational classes, (4) he organized them in chronology from the lens of subsequent generations, (5) he asserted that the main theme is the centre of attraction among early Muslims.

Long before contemporary scholars began to look at knowledge as the “cultural capital” of society, early Muslim scholars correlated knowledge with social endurance.<sup>975</sup> So for example, the complete title of Ibn Ḥibbān's *Mashāhīr* is “Renowned Scholars of Cities and Distinguished Jurists of Regions.” In the simplest terms, place may be defined as “space to which meaning has been ascribed;” and one way of ascribing meaning to space is to represent it in writing. Thus, examining representations of spaces (limited here to towns and regions) in the written record of a society over a period of time reveals culturally and historically specific meaning and yields insight into peoples' relationships to political and social realities.

The words by which Ibn Ḥibbān presents them – ‘*Ulamā*’ (Scholars/Learned), *Fuqahā*’ (Jurists/Law experts) – affirmed their association of status with knowledge. In order

<sup>973</sup> See also Zayde Antrim, “Ibn ‘Asākir’s Representations of Sham and Damascus in the Introduction to the “*Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*””, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1 (Feb., 2006), 111.

<sup>974</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitab Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 2.

<sup>975</sup> Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5.

to associate the idea of scholars with place, Ibn Ḥibbān adopted the term *al-amṣār* (cities) and *al-aqtār* (regions), as he designated some form of territoriality. Consequently, ḥadīth scholars after Ibn Ḥibbān's generation who engaged in the composition of the sciences of ḥadīth transmission books devoted an exclusive topic to the subject of the residence and region of transmitters. For instance, Ibn Ṣalāḥ dedicated the final chapter of his book to the topic of *Ma'rifat Awṭān al-Ruwāt wa-Buldānihim* (The Residence and Lands of Transmitters).<sup>976</sup> Prior to discussing the available examples of *isnād* that draw attention to where the transmitter lived, Ibn Ṣalāḥ suggested "it is commendable for the expert to give the ḥadīth with its *isnāds* and then mention the homelands of its transmitters and other facts about them".<sup>977</sup>

According to Franz Rosenthal, although by the tenth century works on biographical dictionaries began to include all kinds of scholars, litterateurs, statesmen, and even a sprinkling of wealthy businessmen, the defining feature of the majority of the biographical entries remained the individual's engagement with religious sciences, particularly ḥadīth studies.<sup>978</sup> Apparently Ibn Ḥibbān was interested in collecting these individuals' biographies, for a variety of reasons. Apart from ḥadīth, some of the '*ulamā*' or *fuqahā*' were the authors of his sources, which reflected their lives and concerns. For instance, the Rashidun Caliphs were also judges, teachers, merchants, and military leaders.

Ibn Ḥibbān does mention the specific condition for classification for each generation. The *luqya* (encounter) between a people with earlier generation is the essential principle for distinguishing them.<sup>979</sup> In the closing chapter of *Successors of Successors in Madinah*, Ibn Ḥibbān says that the Companions are those who had encountered the Prophet, and the Successors are those who had encountered the Companions and so on.<sup>980</sup> Perhaps the notion of this style is applied to designate a "more collective social generation."<sup>981</sup> And it is possible that it may have been modelled on the following ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*: "The best of men are those of my *qarn* (generation), afterwards those who (are) close to them, afterwards those who (are) close to them."<sup>982</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān offers the following *tarjama* about the ḥadīth: *dhiḥr al-bayān bi-anna khayr hādhiḥ al-umma al-ṣaḥāba thumma al-tābi 'ūn* (Report on the statement that the best of this community are the Companions followed by

<sup>976</sup> Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 404.

<sup>977</sup> Ibid, 405.

<sup>978</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 144.

<sup>979</sup> *EI2*, 10/8

<sup>980</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāḥīr 'Ulamā' al-Amṣār*, 142-143.

<sup>981</sup> *EI2*, 5/8.

<sup>982</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 16/205.

the Successors).<sup>983</sup> Occasionally, one finds in the last entry of each region the Companions who were the last to die in the region, supported with the date if available. He states that the last Companion who died in Makkah was Abū al-Ṭufayl ‘Āmir b. Wathīla in 107/725,<sup>984</sup> in Kufa was ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Awfā in 87/705,<sup>985</sup> and in al-Shām was ‘Abd Allāh b. Busr al-Sulamī in 88/706.<sup>986</sup>

Obviously Ibn Ḥibbān avoids the organisation of these generations into a specific timeline. From another perspective, using the timeline classification will result in abandoning the principle of *luqya*. In *Talqīh al-Fuhūm*, Ibn al-Jawzī provides an example of the *ṭabaqāt* concerning the timeline that was used by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996).<sup>987</sup> Abū Ṭālib distinguished five classes of caliph, jurist, ḥadīth scholar, reader and ascetic for every forty years up to his era. It is possible, though, the inspiration for the came as a “timeline” result of the ḥadīth: “My community will be made up of five classes: firstly forty years with charitable and pious people; they will be followed for the next 150 years by people who will live in compassion and mutual harmony; then for 160 years more there will come people who will turn their backs on each other and will separate themselves; then will come a period of scattering [and of war or of flight] and *al-najā al-najā* (every man for himself).”<sup>988</sup> However, in the *al-Majrūhīn*, Ibn Ḥibbān evaluates this ḥadīth as spurious.<sup>989</sup>

Furthermore, not only did the number of biographies in each generation of the *Mashāhīr* increase but several places were added. From the number of Companions, it can be roughly inferred how the early ḥadīth transmission network proliferated in different regions. Ibn Ḥibbān’s *ṭabaqāt* presentation in the *Mashāhīr* is very useful for the study of cultural centres which at the same time were political centres of their eras.<sup>990</sup> According to Recep Senturk, Ibn Ḥibbān has demonstrated “the polycentric structure of Islamic culture

<sup>983</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 16/205.

<sup>984</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 36.

<sup>985</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>986</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>987</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talqīh al-Fuhūm Ahl al-Āthār fī ‘Uyun al-Tārīkh wa al-Siyar*, (Cairo: Maktaba al-Ādab, 1975), 714-715.

<sup>988</sup> For a succinct overview of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī’s *ṭabaqāt*, see Saeko Yazaki, *Islamic Mysticism and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī: The Role of the Heart*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 134-135. See also Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah (Ḥāshiya al-Sindī)*, ed. Sidqī Jamīl al-‘Atar, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), 921.

<sup>989</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūhīn min al-Muḥaddthīn wa al-Ḍu‘afā’ wa al-Matrūkīn*, (Aleppo: Dār al-Wa‘y, 1396H), 2/171.

<sup>990</sup> Recep Senturk, *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Ḥadīth Transmission Network 610-1505*, (Stanford University Press, 2005), 39.



by documenting the fluctuations in the number of scholars over time in the important cities of each period.”<sup>991</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the *Mashāhīr* includes a brief description of the privileged persons of each of the three early generations who lived in capitals of the Islamic world. Practically the *ṭabaqāt* dealing with the Companions, the Successors, and the Successors of Successors are subdivided into regions where many ḥadīth transmitters were active. The cities or regions covered range from Yemen in the south to the al-Shām frontier in the north, and from Egypt in the west to Khurasan in the east. Ibn Ḥibbān insisted that most attention had been devoted to Madinah, Makkah, Kufa, Basra, Damascus and Baghdad. A general explanation of the region is usually found in the introduction of a section. As an illustration, Ibn Ḥibbān’s usage of the simile style may dazzle a reader when he compares al-Shām like a prostrate man.<sup>992</sup> He depicts a picture of a man

his head is Palestine, his neck is Jordan, his chest is Damascus, his stomach is Homs, his navel is Aleppo, his right leg is the cities above Euphrates to Iraq’s border, his left leg is the cities above Tigris to Iraq’s border, his right hand is the cities on the deserts side, and his left hand is the cities on the coasts. The name of al-Shām includes all these cities from Arish in Egypt to Sawad,<sup>993</sup> but that the real al-Shām is from Balis<sup>994</sup> to al-Dhamin<sup>995</sup>

The first section of the book is devoted to the Companions who lived in Madinah. It begins with a short introduction that gives Ibn Ḥibbān’s purpose that selecting Madinah as the first city or region of the book. Then Ibn Ḥibbān continues with an abbreviated biography of the Prophet which describes his genealogy, birth, first revelation, duration in Makkah and Madinah, and finally his death.<sup>996</sup> Next Ibn Ḥibbān presents the Companions in rank order, whereas he organizes the classification based on the Rashidun Caliphs, the Companions who were promised paradise and the rest who lived in Madinah.

Although Ibn Ḥibbān does not declare a preference for *Ahl al-Bayt* (people of the house) over others, it is possible to tell from the order of presentation that he has a certain preference for them. After the Companion’s generation, the first seven entries of Successors

<sup>991</sup> Recep Senturk, *Narrative Social Structure*, 39.

<sup>992</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Mashāhīr ‘Ulama al-Amsar*, 49.

<sup>993</sup> Sawad was the name used in Early Islamic times (first/seventh to sixth/twelfth centuries) for the southern Iraq.

<sup>994</sup> Balis or Emar (modern Tell Meskene, Aleppo) was an ancient Amorite city on the great bend in the mid-Euphrates in north eastern Sham.

<sup>995</sup> Fleischhammer assumes it was Siffin.

<sup>996</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitab Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 3-4.

in Madinah and the first five entries of Successors of Successors in Madinah both deal with *Ahl al-Bayt*.<sup>997</sup> And between the first four Caliph and the Companions who were promised paradise, Ibn Ḥibbān positioned Ḥasan (who succeeded ‘Alī for six or seven months) and his brother Ḥusayn.<sup>998</sup> He also places the *Ahl al-Bayt* like ‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭallib, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, al-Faḍl b. al-‘Abbās, and Qaṭhm b. al-‘Abbās after the Companions who were promised paradise, preceding other Companions.<sup>999</sup>

Coming immediately after Madinah, Ibn Ḥibbān arranged the Companions into specific regions in the following order; Makkah, Basra, Kufa, Damascus, Egypt, Yemen, and Khurasan. The next section of the *Mashāhīr* that deals with the Successors and Successors of Successors utilizes the same order as that used for the Companions. Only in the case of the Successors of Successors, does Ibn Ḥibbān add Baghdad and Wasit the new centres that are occupied by scholars.<sup>1000</sup> It is not logically necessary that number of people is a measurement for determining the early centre of ḥadīth. Perhaps the best way to analyse ḥadīth scholars and ḥadīth to consider the number of ḥadīth narrated by each authority. In any case, the number of scholars who populated a city or region still can bring us a picture of commonly attracted place. And perhaps the inclination of the later school of law may also have been influenced by the residence of earlier Companions.<sup>1001</sup>

In the era of Companions, Madinah remained the centre of scholars although new centres began to emerge. The prominent Medinese Companions in ḥadīth like Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Umar, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and others occupied themselves primarily with teaching the ḥadīth to younger generations i.e. the Successors. Madinah contains 152 Companions, 36 per cent of the total Companions’ generation.<sup>1002</sup> 61 Companions live and represent the attributes that legitimate the scholarly authority in Makkah, or 14 per cent of the total; in Basra 52 Companions, 12 per cent; in Kufa 55 Companions, 13 per cent; in Damascus 55 Companions, 13 per cent; in Egypt 22 Companions, 5 per cent; in Yemen 16 Companions, 3 per cent; and in Khurasan 5

<sup>997</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 62 and 127.

<sup>998</sup> Ibid, 7.

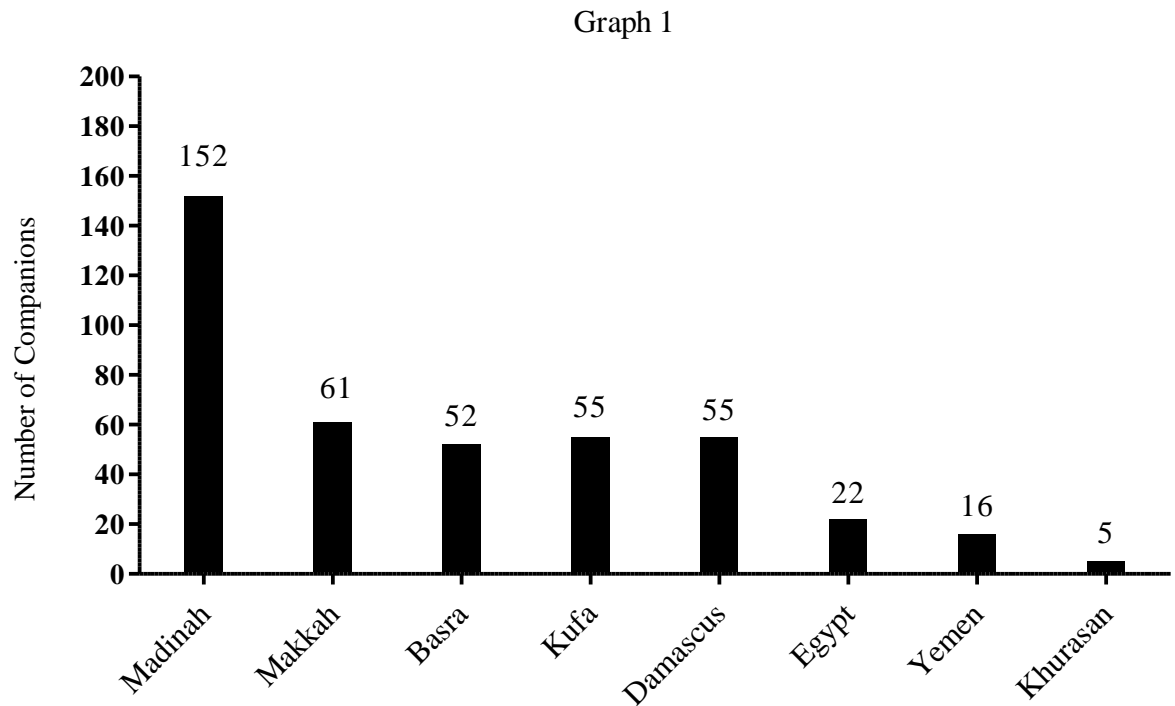
<sup>999</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>1000</sup> Ibid, 174-178.

<sup>1001</sup> Recep Senturk, *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Ḥadīth Transmission Network 610-1505*, 39.

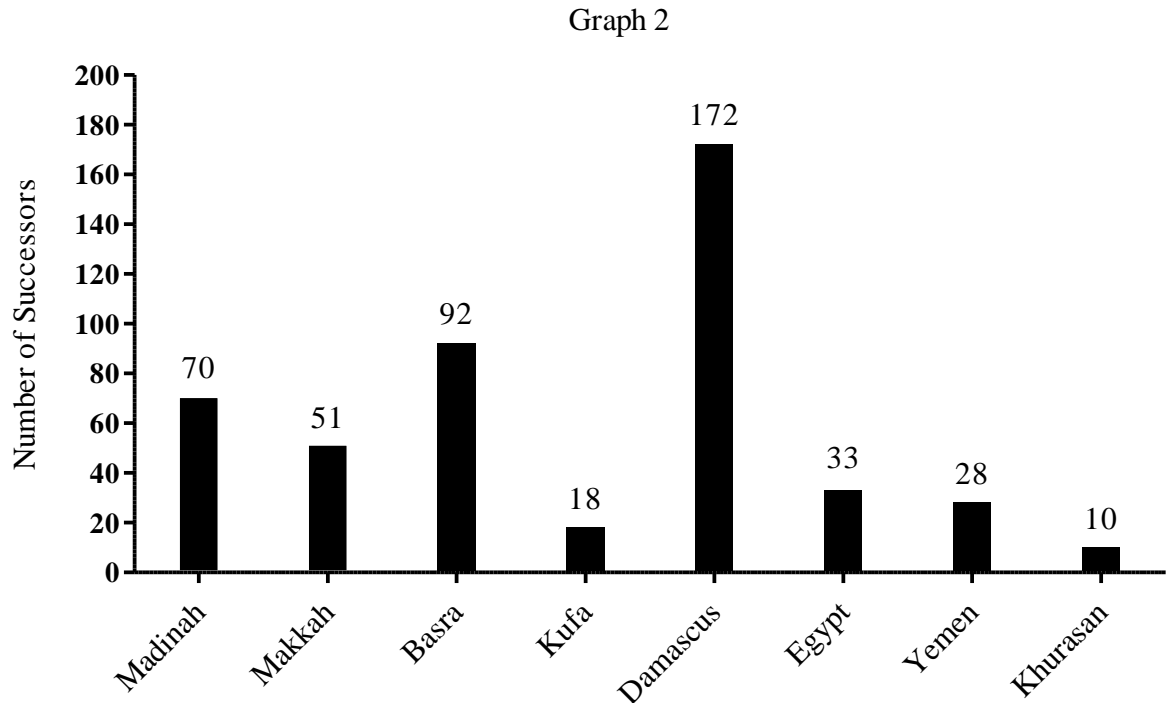
<sup>1002</sup> Ibid.

Companions, somewhat more than 1 per cent. The numerical distribution of the Companion subject to region also can be seen in the following graph



A tremendous change occurred in the time of Successors. Al-Shām with Damascus as the capital of the Umayyad Empire emerged as the highest number of entries with 172 Successors, 30 per cent of the total Successors.<sup>1003</sup> From Makkah, Ibn Ḥibbān placed 51 Successors, 9 per cent of the total; Basra 92 Successors, 16 per cent; Kufa 18 Successors, 3 per cent; Egypt 33 Successors, 6 per cent; Yemen 28 Successors, 5 per cent; Khurasan 10 Successors, almost 2 per cent. Meanwhile the number of Successors who lived in Madinah was 70, or 12 per cent, a number that later on dropped even further, during the time of the Successors of Successors which saw Iraq emerge as the new centre.

<sup>1003</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitab Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*, 111.



As can be seen in the next graph, in the time of Successors of Successors, Iraq was the most populous region; with its 229 Successors of Successors accounting for about 45 per cent of the generation.<sup>1004</sup> Iraq's two most populated cities alone, Basra and Kufa, together constitute about 40 per cent of the Successors of Successors numbers. They are followed by Damascus with 81, or 16 per cent; Makkah with 58, 11 per cent; Egypt with 45, 9 per cent; Khurasan with 41, 8 per cent; Madinah with 31, 6 per cent; Yemen with 25, 5 per cent; Wasit with 20, 4 per cent; Baghdad 4, below than 1 per cent.

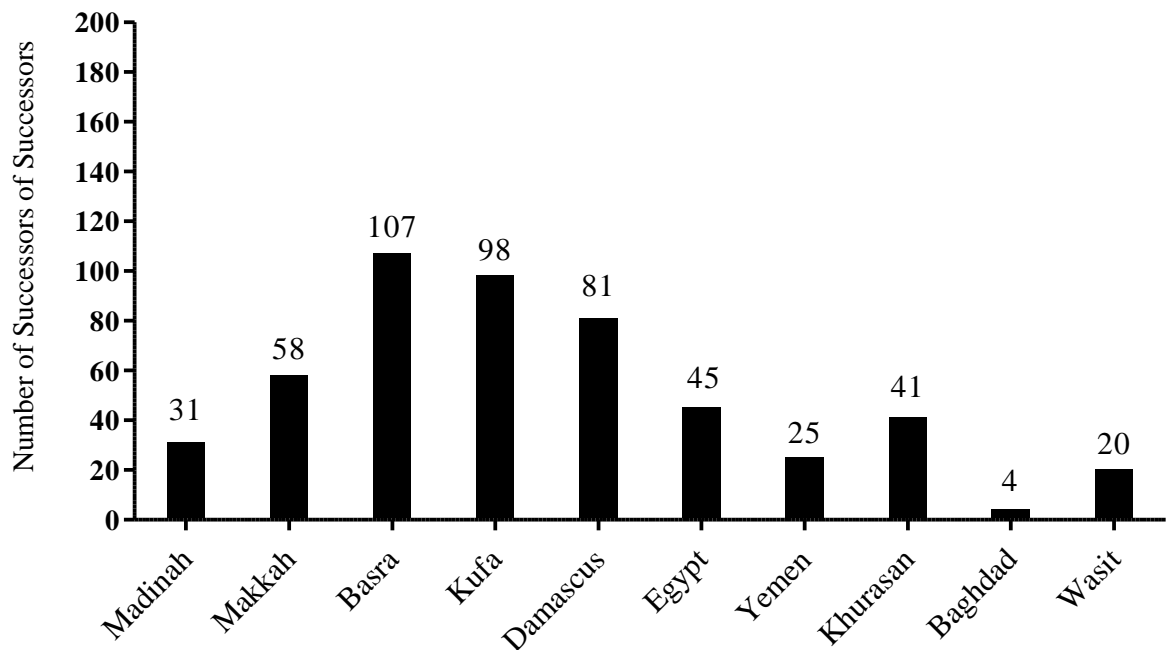
This section also has been scrutinized by Nurit Tsafrir who was interested in the spread of the Hanafi School of law for the period between the middle of the second/eight century until the end of the third/ninth century.<sup>1005</sup> She indicates that the number of Hanafi biographies in the section on the Successors of Successors in Kufa is considerably significant: of about seventy Kufis who died between 130/747 and 218/833, seventeen were “semi-

<sup>1004</sup> Ibn Hibbān, *Kitab Mashāhīr 'Ulamā' al-Amṣār*, 150-178

<sup>1005</sup> Nurit Tsafrir, *The History of an Islamic School of Law: The Early Spread of Hanafism*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 19.

Hanafis” and only six, or about 10 per cent of the total, were Hanafis. However, she argues the difficulty to measure the proportion of Hanafis to non-Hanafis as this book deal mainly with ḥadīth transmitters. In the *Mashāhīr* sources the legal affiliation of a scholar is not mentioned and can only be inferred from indirect indications, such as the teachers and the students. This ambiguity in the *Mashāhīr* reflects the historical situation in the second/eight and third/ninth century, when there was no clear distinction between the legal affiliation of a scholar. It may be, then, in the early period Hanafī scholars were less involved in the transmission of ḥadīth.

Graph 3



With plenty information at his disposal, Ibn Ḥibbān himself must have been aware of the fact that some of the biographies he included in the third generation were of men whose affiliation with the various school of thought or school of law. Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥibbān was able to delegate the plan of transmitting the biography of the early Muslim community, or at least, of those member whom he deemed worthy of commemoration. It is generally accepted that work such the *Mashāhīr* that includes biographies of more than a thousand of people from three early period of Islam provides well-emphasized datum on ḥadīth transmitters network.

## Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has provided a short analysis of the purposes, history, organization, total of figures, and basic strategies used in Ibn Ḥibbān's biographical dictionaries. It has portrayed the important trends in ḥadīth scholarship and also indicated that the material contained in many biographical entries must be used with caution. It has not, however, produced a comprehensive examination of the wide dimension of prosopographical texts available in Ibn Ḥibbān's works and among his contemporaries. For Ibn Ḥibbān, ḥadīth transmitters or scholars belong together in *ṭabaqāt* – he frequently indicates that he constructs his works in this approach. Though organized by a bibliographic rubric at the macrostructural level, and periodically chronologically too, there are other constructional principles that are made explicit by Ibn Ḥibbān: chronology (date of death), affinity, geographical origin, and fame. The relation of biographical dictionary to ḥadīth is clearly asserted and demonstrated by Ibn Ḥibbān. But the ramification of such a connection, developed by ḥadīth scholars, seems not to evoke the desirable response. It is also beneficial here, to go back to the notion, which was mentioned earlier that the aim of authenticating the biography and ḥadīth of the Prophet as well as successive generations led to the sifting by Ibn Ḥibbān of all available sources about them which resulted in biographical material on them being collected and used to assess their scholarship. Assuredly the ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāhīr* are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet. This was at the basis of the outlook that sustained and gave meaning to the biographical dictionary in the late age of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* movement and beyond. Through the arrangement of biographical dictionaries Ibn Ḥibbān could reveal the genealogy of authority he had constructed over the path of his career on the following generation of scholars. The *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāhīr* did this in distinct approaches. For the *Thiqāt* the transmitters designated in a “more collective social generation” using *ṭabaqāt* as the continuity of the community. As the *Mashāhīr* fell into focusing of important centre of ḥadīth in the course of three centuries.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study has been to expound the scholarship of Ibn Ḥibbān in the fourth/tenth century through his ḥadīth collection and biographical dictionaries. Hence, the focus of Chapter One was on the history of biographical dictionaries in the Islamic world and identifying the biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān and his predecessors. In general, the biographical dictionary is usually described as the purview of a history of a religion's approach to encyclopaedic life-narratives. Biographies of the Prophet, his Companions, and other scholars, have all operated to focus Islamic faithfulness and piety. While illuminating or phenomenological studies of a few features of Islamic biographical writing exist, there remains a demand for a more analytical survey to show how biographical appearances evolved and developed. The multitudinous genres of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters that were presented in Chapter One that had been composed over the first three centuries were celebrated as a result of this advancement.

Throughout history, the function of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters was to categorize those who had the necessary knowledge to be qualified as authoritative in this scholarship. Interestingly, since the earliest organized disciplines in Islam included the science of ḥadīth transmission, the early biographical dictionary works are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements in general works and in the histories of scholars or particular cities and provinces. In turn this influenced the collection of biographical dictionaries of other classes of individuals investigating the Qur'ān, law, Arabic language and so forth but it never refrained from making links with the science of ḥadīth transmission. Furthermore, a thorough observation has also indicated how the genre has undergone several phases of adaption in its numerous elements. It follows therefore that the basic qualification for inclusion in the general run of biographical dictionaries is the contribution brought by the individual to the scholarship of the particular field. On the other hand, the selection of the biographer like Ibn Ḥibbān is determined by the appropriate condition to which his concern is directed and this latter in turn established as a rule for the discipline.

Moreover, coming out of the later works which were based on them, and which still exist, the general idea of this genre can be derived with a reasonable degree of certainty. Their contents consisted mainly of short descriptions of the genealogies and dates of birth and death; some biographical information; and a brief critique of their reliability, backed up with the opinions of important authorities and contemporaries. Analysis of the arrangement

of Ibn Ḥibbān's work demonstrates that all of the features mentioned above are present. Also, by utilizing the biographical dictionaries of Ibn Ḥibbān's successors, Chapter Two tries to reconstruct the biography of Ibn Ḥibbān within the context not only of ḥadīth scholarship, but also Islamic history in general. It introduces Ibn Ḥibbān from his early life when he began a journey to seek knowledge, building a scholarly career until the end of his life. However, because of very brief references to Ibn Ḥibbān in various histories, chronological, and biographical dictionaries, his biography is treated in a general way.

Nevertheless, in Chapter Three, the focus of discussion is on examining the literature where Ibn Ḥibbān is included in the ḥadīth hall of fame. It mainly examines the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Ibn Ḥibbān* and provides a summarised translation of the introduction. In order to situate the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and its author within the history of Islam and its magnificent tradition of ḥadīth scholarship, Chapter Three begins by comparing Ibn Ḥibbān with several of his students, teachers, and early participants of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* network. The basic principles and terminology of the science of ḥadīth transmission in authenticating the status of ḥadīths mentioned could be considered as a pioneering attempt by the ḥadīth scholars at that time. It appears that Ibn Ḥibbān's theory of authenticity was established upon a set of formulas pertaining to transmission and its knowledge. By and large, this theory revolved almost entirely around the examination of *isnāds*. It is also clear to see that his higher objective is first to study the ḥadīth, especially on the basis of its authenticity. Then he equipped a set of legal theory which classified the relevance and degree of applicability of any given rule or precedent according to *al-taqāsim* (divisions) and *al-anwā'* (categories) for his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Additionally, it is worth noting that there survives a second Sunnī established practise of legal theory, virtually unexplored, that operates parallel to the standard or mainstream one. The earliest surviving articulation of legal theory in al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and many others works of ḥadīth scholars have been overshadowed by the dominant tradition of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. It is difficult to establish whether a particular book is within a certain legal school or is particular for a certain region in the protracted and diversified history of the Muslim world. What is more, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the *tarājim* which may be regarded as among the most important characteristics of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* as well as his other works. One can see that the advancement of ḥadīth collecting and sifting continued alongside that of exegesis, theology, legal principles and other literature. By the time of the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the considerable weight given to the study of the *matn* of ḥadīth resulted in a proliferation of commentaries, or in Ibn Ḥibbān's case the *tarājim*,



which gave extensive exploration, containing *matn* criticism, the historical connections and references of the text, theological, juridical, language matters, and the rest. And throughout the introduction and contents of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it shows that Ibn Ḥibbān is unique among fourth/tenth century ḥadīth compilers for both his high standards of ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and his articulation of an unstudied set of divisions and categories that approach the topics in the classical legal theory tradition. It is true that Ibn Ḥibbān's intention was also to compose a legal theory book supported with ḥadīth. This gigantic *Ṣaḥīḥ* could only be studied advantageously and its transmitters appropriately evaluated with the holistic study of a number of technical terms in the legal theory and the science of the ḥadīth transmission.

As it has been seen above, the growing interest in the actual critical appraisal of transmitters is that this imposing body of material was perceived to be capable of authenticating ḥadīth on the basis of criteria drawn from the domain of *rijāl* criticism. By looking at this familiar notion, Chapter Four and Five attempt to demonstrate the essential features of Ḥibbān's biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters. The *Majrūḥīn*, *Thiqāt*, and *Mashāḥīr* were a scholarly exercise undertaken by Ibn Ḥibbān to cull the reports by earlier master ḥadīth critics who could be subordinated under the approved or impugned ḥadīth transmitters. In the *Majrūḥīn*, Ibn Ḥibbān builds up a network which connects ḥadīth criticism to prominent critics or authority from preceding generations, that is to say *ṭabaqāt*. The significance of Ibn Ḥibbān's seven-*ṭabaqāt* presentation has been discussed from the descriptions of the members of each generation as well as the identification and biographical information of the forty-three men. The *Majrūḥīn* also was a technical criticism in which Ibn Ḥibbān contributed his own methodology of transmitters' evaluation based on those of the early critics in the *ṭabaqāt*.

Substantially, by examining Ibn Ḥibbān's *Majrūḥīn* one gains an understanding into the different opinions relating to even a single transmitter among the various critics. Yet one can also detect in this discussion changes in the conception which relate directly to the question of the status and style of critical evaluation. His *Majrūḥīn*'s introduction is so indispensable due to his focus on the issue of epistemology and ḥadīth criticism as well as of some of his methodological aspects which symbolize the practical functionality of *rijāl* criticism as a means of ḥadīth authentication at that time. More importantly, he also outlined in some detail twenty categories of impugned transmitters in the *Majrūḥīn* discussing essential definitions, examples, demonstrations and related topics. On the other hand, the ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāḥīr* as

discussed in Chapter Five are presented as the successors of the Prophet or reliable transmitters. Both the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāhīr* are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements in the genealogy of authority and in the important centre of ḥadīth in the course of three centuries. As such, not only are his works unprecedented compared to those of his contemporaries, but they also attracted further discourses and scholarly pursuits on the base work in the fourth/tenth century and beyond.

It should also be mentioned that due to the restricted capacity of this research, there is also much contention pertaining to ḥadīth scholarship and its studies that we have examined in a general way. Further study on the privileges of ḥadīth scholars as a continuation of the general theme of ḥadīth scholarship among Muslims is desirable. These encompass an assessment of the importance of the achievements of figures such as Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Khuzayma, al-Rāmahurmuzī, al-Dāraqūṭnī, al-Hākim al-Naysaburī, and many others among Ibn Ḥibbān’s contemporaries, culminating in the establishment of composing works on the science of ḥadīth transmission and its discourse in the fourth/tenth century and beyond. More than that, the institutionalization of ḥadīth studies in scholarly tradition and its position in the religious debate of early Muslim are another relevant dimension that one can see.

Finally, it is not possible to illustrate the extent of the significance of Ibn Ḥibbān upon the study of ḥadīth except to say that after him there was almost no exposition of ḥadīth collections and biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters which did not come in one way or another under the influence of the works of the great Khorasan scholar, even if certain later ḥadīth critics disagreed with some of his inclusions of authentic ḥadīths and transmitters’ evaluation. His writings reach over the whole of the Islamic world; his works began to be transmitted by the students of ḥadīth and his introductions of *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Thiqāt* and *Majrūḥīn*, recordings of ḥadīth, evaluations of transmitters, quoted mostly in the science of ḥadīth transmission books, and they continued to be studied and discussed today as they were one millennia ago.

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